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Self and Identity in Modern Psychology and Indian Thought

Anand C. Paranjpe

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SELF AND IDENTITY IN MODERN PSYCHOLOGY AND INDIAN THOUGHT

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To the memory of my revered guru,
the late Shri B. R. Ambekar;
and to my most respected teacher,
the late Professor Erik H. Erikson;
great healers who stimulated my thinking about self and identity
in their own different ways.

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Preface

Some of the common questions that confront all of us are: What does it mean to be a human being? What makes us good and happy persons? And how can we attain happiness, or the highest possible good in life? These are common and yet profound questions that have been answered differently in different societies at different times. In the process of growing up within a specific cultural milieu, we tend to seek answers to deeply personal questions such as "Who am I?" or "What is the best that can happen to me?" in the light of accumulated wisdom of our forebears. As the 20th century draws to a close, the world is rapidly getting smaller, and many of us get exposed to the legacies of several cultures from around the world. The increasing exposure to varied cultures is both an opportunity and a challenge.

Born in India during the colonial days, I was exposed to a highly Anglicized educational system and a completely Eurocentric curriculum. The colonial mold of the Indian educational system has persisted throughout the five decades of the postcolonial era. As a student of philosophy in the rnid-1950s, I read such texts as Plato's Republic, took courses in metaphysics and ethics shaped by thinkers of the European Enlightment, and earned my Bachelor's degree with a philosophy major without having to learn a single concept of Indian philosophy. Graduate training in psychology in an Indian university in the early 1960s also bore a completely Anglo-American mold, such that the transition to research and teaching in a North American system was easy. Nevertheless, growing up in India inevitably involved exposure to the indigenous intellectual and cultural tradition. My father introduced me to the Bhagavad-Gitā, and the nationalistic movement brought home the relevance of traditional Indian ways of life, philosophy, and ideals. The dual cultural heritage of Europe and India became a matter of personal concern and a constant battle when, as an immigrant to Canada, a sense of Indian identity continued to grow in proportion to the constant pressures for assimilation into the Western way of life. This volume is a product of an attempt to make sense of the dual cultural legacy of Europe and India.

Part of the exposure to Western models in psychology was an opportunity to

learn Western theories of human development, first through books while in India and then under the tutelage of the late Professor Erik Erikson at Harvard University. After several years of studying and teaching Western theories of personality and developmental psychology, it began to dawn on me that lessons learned from the Indian tradition were in some ways very similar — and yet in other ways profoundly different — from their Western counterparts. The Erikson approach, true to its roots in psychoanalysis and the academic milieu, focused on pathological, as well as normal, ways in which individuals cope with inner and outer changes throughout the life span. Erikson speculated on what remains the same and is untouched by constant flux in a person's passage through the life cycle; he even hinted at the existential significance of the quest for the principle of sameness underlying the continual revision in one's sense of identity. However, in Erikson's work, as in contemporary psychology at large, the deeply philosophical and existential issues about self and identity get routinely excluded as unsuitable to the scientific and academic sphere to which psychology is inextricably bound. In my view, such restriction of the scope of inquiry into the nature of selfhood is an incidental product of the historical and cultural background of contemporary psychology. Such restriction did not apply to self-knowledge as pursued in the Indian tradition and there is no reason to regard such a conventional disciplinary limitation as either necessary or legitimate. Moreover, the philosophical and spiritual aspects of psychological thinking in the Indian tradition complement contemporary psychological thinking and offset some of its serious shortcomings.

Self and identity remain central topics of inquiry in several related disciplines today: philosophy, anthropology, and sociology, along with psychology. The work presented in this volume is allied to, and yet different from, some of the recent publications in this broad field of studies. Consistent with the readership of this literature, which is spread across various disciplines, I have tried to address this book to an interdisciplinary audience. I also presume an international audience spread across the English-speaking world in the East as well as the West.

In terms of its scholarly and historical approach, this book resembles Charles Taylor's Sources of Self (Harvard University Press, 1989). In dealing with the concepts of person and identity, and in viewing them from philosophical and psychological angles, it resembles Harré's Personal Being (Blackwell, 1983). However, unlike these works, which are framed almost exclusively within the Western cultural conceptual frameworks, the present work tries to integrate Western and Eastern perspectives. In this regard, it strikes a chord with Alan Roland's In Search of Self in India and Japan (Princeton University Press, 1988), but it does not adopt his clinical approach. Like Steven Collins's Selfless Persons (Cambridge University Press, 1982), it delves into Eastern traditions but deals with psychological issues more than philosophical ones. It shares some of the spiritual and transpersonal concerns of Eastern traditions that such authors as Alan Watts and Ken Wilber address, but it tries to connect more directly and critically with

classical Sanskrit texts and their scholarly interpretations. Like David Loy's Nonduality (Yale University Press, 1988) and *Working Emptiness* by Newman Glass (Scholars Press, 1995), this book considers the practice of meditation within the context of postmodern thought, but unlike them it focuses on Advaita Vedantic, rather than Buddhist, tradition.

Acknowledgments

It has been over 15 years since I prepared the first outline of this book. As could be expected, the project has evolved well beyond the contours that I had envisioned at the beginning. This work would not have seen the light of the day without the facilities provided by Simon Fraser University. The University's sabbatical leave policy allowed me to spend almost 2 years of full-time work on this project at different stages. In 1986, when this project was in its early stages, I was invited to give a series of lectures at the Allahabad University in India. I wish to thank Radhakrishna Naidu, Janak Pandey, R. C. Tripathi, Ajit Dalal, and other friends from Allahabad for giving me valuable opportunities to discuss various ideas. I am very grateful to Krishna S. and Mrs. Leela Arjunwadkar and Ashok Kelkar for guiding me in the right direction and for providing inspiration and encouragement year after year.

Teaching a senior undergraduate seminar in personality at Simon Fraser University gave me an opportunity to discuss a variety of ideas about the self, identity, self-actualization, and self-realization in the classroom. A similar opportunity was provided by a course on self and society that I taught as part of the Graduate Liberal Studies Program at SFU. Numerous students in these classes helped me in articulating my own ideas and often made interesting comments. Although I cannot list the many members of the classes, I wish to thank them all. I must also thank my friends from the Western Canadian Theoretical Psychologists (WCTP) group, who provided intellectual stimulation and encouragement at our annual meetings in beautiful Banff. I have particularly benefitted from my discussions with Vaden House, Don Kuiken, Marvin Macdonald, Tim Rogers, and Hank Stam of the WCTP group.

I also wish to express my gratitude to a number of colleagues and students at Simon Fraser University who read portions of the manuscript at various stages of its preparation and gave many useful comments and suggestions: Bruce Alexander, Ted Altar, Gira Bhatt, John Bogardus, Tirthankar Bose, Jeremy Carpendale, Michael Coles, Steve Cunningham, Karen Jackson, James Marcia, Leslie Morgan, Ken Porter, Wyn Roberts, and Randy Tonks. Several friends from India and North America also read one or several chapters and made numerous suggestions: John Broughton, Michael Chandler, Ashok Gangadean, Anthony Greenwald, David Ho, Uday Jain, Don Kuiken, Mahesh Mehta, Carl Ratner, Joseph

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Anand C. Paranjpe

Pronunciation and Transliteration of Sanskrit Terms

The transliteration of Sanskrit terms used in this book follows the most commonly used format. What follows is a general guide, rather than a strict phonetic account, of Sanskrit terms transliterated in Roman equivalents.

The vowels are transliterated and pronounced as follows:

a	as *u* in cut	e	as *ay* in say
ā	as *a* in far	ai	somewhat like *ai* in aisle
i	as *i* in fit	o	as *o* in go
ī	as *ee* in see	ou	as *ou* in out
u	as *u* in put	ṁ or ṅ	nasalizes the preceding vowel
ṛ	somewhat like *r* in bird	ḥ	sound like *h* with a sharp exhalation of air

The consonants are generally similar to English with a few exceptions. There is a series of "alviolars" (t, th, d, dh, n) pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the gum ridge, and a series of retroflex sounds (ṭ ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ, ḷ) by curling the tongue backward. The s is a similar retroflex. The c sounds like *ch* in chair, j as in *j* in jug, *ś* like *sh* in shirt, ñ like its equivalent in Spanish señor, and ṇ like *n* in king. The aspirates (kh, gh, ch, jh, ṭh, ḍh, th, dh, ph, and bh) are pronounced with a clearly audible breath following the consonant, for example ṭh as in anthill, and ḍh as in bald-head.

A note of citation of Sanskrit sources: Sanskrit sources cited in the text are indicated by the name of the author followed by the numbers (in parenthesis) of chapter, section, and verse where applicable. The dates of numerous texts of the Indian tradition are not known, or known only approximately, and as such their original dates of publication are not given.

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1

The Context of Inquiry

THE THEME OF INQUIRY

The nature of self has been a topic of great interest and serious inquiry in the East as well as the West from ancient times to the present. The nature of selfhood was a central topic of inquiry in the Upanisads, which are philosophical treatises com posed in India around 1500-600 BCE.[1] In the Bṛhādaraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.5), for instance, the sage Yājnavalkya exhorts his wife Maitreyi to contemplate the nature of Self. This injunction parallels its ancient Greek counterpart, "Know thyself." Century after century, some of the best minds of the world have made important contributions to the inquiry into the nature of selfhood. Nevertheless, the riddle is not yet solved; the self continues to be an enigma. In our own times, numerous psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and others continue to contribute to a steady stream of publications about the self. In psychology, where the self had been ostracized during the heyday of behaviorism, the self and identity have returned as popular topics of active research.

The term self has acquired varied meanings, and we shall examine some of them in the following chapter. Here, we may begin by simply noting that common meanings of the self involve a variety of answers to a common question, "Who am I?" It is commonplace that this question elicts many different responses from one and the same person, not only at different times in differing contexts, but also at the same time and in the same situation. All of us must have different "selves," depending on who one is dealing with; and despite the radical changes that naturally occur in one's understanding of oneself throughout the life span, one rarely doubts that one continues to be one and the same "I." In other words, most people tend have an intuitive experience of self-sameness, or a sense of personal identity. Although the sense of personal identity is a matter of common experience, serious inquiry has often shown that a firm basis for unity and self-sameness is not easy to establish. The question, "What, if anything, remains the same in a person?" is a profound enigma.

The enigma has elicited two mutually opposed views in both the East and the

West. One emphatically affirms some kinds of immutable basis for selfhood, whereas the other equally strongly denies any such basis. Time and again the yea-sayers have proposed a variety of formulations adducing a permanent self, and the nay-sayers have usually come up with fitting statements of denial. In the East, while the school of Advaita Vedanta within the Upanisadic tradition has consistently claimed a firm experiential basis for selfhood, numerous schools of Buddhism have equally persistently denied any such basis. In ancient Greece, Pythagoras (ca. 582–507BC believed strongly in the immortality of the soul, whereas Democritus (ca. 460–370BC) denied its existence. In 18th century Europe, David Hume claimed that there was no permanent, observable self, whereas Immanuel Kant reasoned in favor of an unchanging transcendental ego. In our own times, the psychologist Erik Erikson has advocated the concept of identity in a spirit that is, as I shall argue later, essentially Kantian. On the opposite side, B. E Skinner followed the Humean legacy in criticizing the concept of self.

The dialectical interplay of positions for and against the self has enriched the Indian and Western intellectual traditions. Within each hemisphere, the historically accumulated literature on the self and identity is immensely varied and immeasurably vast. Until very recent times the Indian and European intellectual traditions were largely — although not completely — isolated from each other. In the last couple of decades, however, publications attempting to bring together Eastern and Western conceptions of the self have begun to appear in a variety of journals and books. The appearance of these publications indicates a growing interest in the comparison of Eastern and Western perspectives on the self and promises mutual enrichment through constructive criticism. In several previous publications (Paranjpe, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1995b), I have explored some of the parallels and contrasts between Indian and Western views of self and identity. The present work attempts to deal with the same issues, along with some related others in greater depth and detail than in the earlier works.

The natural home for issues like self and identity is the field of "personality" in modem psychology. In contemporary psychology there are numerous theories of personality that provide differing views of human nature. Many of these competing alternatives offer matching perspectives on self and identity. Students of psychology are often bewildered by the variety of viewpoints presented in standard personality texts. A careful comparative study of competing theories, preferably within a broader metatheoretical framework, helps put the differences among their approaches in perspective. Rychlak (1981), for instance, suggests a metatheoretical framework based on the contrasting epistemologies of Lockean empiricism and Kantian rationalism. Such a framework is particularly useful for a systematic comparison of differing views of self and identity, since, as previously noted, Hume and Kant are the leading advocates of the denial and affirmation of self-sameness in human beings, respectively. We shall examine their arguments in the following chapter and review some of the prominent Western conceptions of

self and identity. The Advaita Vedantic and Buddhist views on the self are dialectical opposites in a manner that roughly parallels the Kantian and Humean alternatives in the West. It would therefore make sense to compare Indian and Western views in relation to these polar opposites. A serious comparative study of apparently similar approaches demands a close look.

Even a preliminary acquaintance with Indian and Western perspectives suggests the possibilities of broader and deeper understanding of person, self, identity, and other such issues of common interest. However, there is a wide gap that separates parallel perspectives that originated centuries and continents apart. Attempting to bridge the gap between them is not an easy task. However, an effort in this direction will be very worth while, since the benefits in terms of self-understanding seem to outweigh the costs. Attempting an East–West convergence should allow us to get the "best of both worlds." Like the fusion of differing perspectives of the right and the left eye that allow depth perception,[2] the blending of East and West can be expected to deepen our understanding of issues of common interest. A systematic comparison of alternative perspectives on common issues requires us to "step out" of each approach, now and then, and attempt to view one in light of the other. In this process, the distinct strengths and weaknesses of the different contributions stand in sharp contrast, and irreconcilable differences as well as deep similarities can be detected. Sometimes the blind spots of one approach are illuminated in the light of the other. Implicit assumptions that are often forgotten–such as the fact that we speak prose or that we breathe air–become explicit. In comparative studies, we can better raise and answer a number of questions than in studies that remain within a single framework.

What are the axiomatic assumptions on which we build our inquiries? Are they not different in different systems of thought? Are there any absolute truths that we must grant? What are the criteria for deciding in the case of conflicting claims that appear in independently developing approaches to common issues? Many of these questions involve epistemological issues that will be addressed as we continue with our comparative study.

There are many difficulties in a comparative inquiry that present themselves from the outset. First, the historically accumulated literatures on self and identity in the Indian and Western intellectual traditions are enormously extensive and varied, and more material is added every day. As such, one has to give up the pretense to know everything and is forced to be selective; the choice of particular ideas to the neglect of others must remain somewhat arbitrary. Second, the differing sociocultural contexts of theories seem to systematically shape them in distinctive ways, and it is difficult to know enough about the contexts and ways in which they may have influenced the perspectives. Neither the nature of the sociocultural context nor the nature of its impact may be known very well for sheer lack of information. Indeed, there is a paucity of literature that examines perspectives on psychology in highly differing sociocultural and historical contexts. Another difficulty in

comparative study is the lack of a common comprehensive framework within which meaningful comparisons can be made. But unless one begins, one would not even recognize the nature of difficulties in psychological understanding across cultures.

Although it seems foolhardy to try to undertake such a difficult task, I find myself dragged into it. Upward of a century of European colonization of Asia has brought the West to the East in a close encounter. For Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), an Englishman who was born and had lived in India for a long period of time, it had appeared that the twain could never meet. But as the 20th century draws to a close, jumbo jets and communication satellites have brought the East and the West closer together than ever before. Everyone today lives in Marshall McLuhan's "global village'' (McLuhan & Powers, 1989). Moreover, for the millions who have migrated from one hemisphere to the other, elements of Eastern and Western worldviews become part of life. In the process of globalization, there are many of us who have binational or integrated cultural identities by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage. Such persons must face the problems arising from the duality of their cultural existence, whether they like it or not. Recently, Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) has called such people "halfies."[3] In my own case, having lived an equal number of decades of my life in India and Canada, and having been exposed about equally to Indian and Western thought, the cross-cultural encounter of ideas is a matter of daily existence. For cultural halfies, ideas become an integral part of one's personality regardless of their origin, and self-understanding and understanding across cultures become inseparably fused. When the problem becomes an integral part of daily life, it can no longer be shunted off as too difficult to deal with; one must face it the best way one can.

One of the problems in the study of the self is that the current inquiry into this issue is divided into disciplinary specialities, particularly anthropology, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, and sociology. These disciplines have their own different mandates, audiences, journals, and rules of discourse. Such disciplinary divisions were unknown to the ancients in the East, as well as the West. Disciplinary divisions often tend to be sharply drawn, whereby some issues are ruled legitimate in some disciplines and not in others. William James, for instance, made a sharp distinction between the self as a "thinker" as opposed to his or her "thoughts," and assigned the former as a "metaphysical" issue fit for the philosopher but unfit for the psychologist. Although advantages of disciplinary specialization are too obvious to disregard, such partitions between metaphysical versus psychological domains pose artificial obstacles in relating perspectives from psychology with those of philosophy. Also, it is common in contemporary psychology to deal with current viewpoints without regard to their historical roots. Such an ahistorical stance is based on the assumption that science progresses by rendering previous steps obsolete, always moving ahead to necessarily improved levels in understanding. This assumption needs to be examined before drawing on

historical sources. Also, the very idea of comparing theories across cultures would seem to implicitly assume and justify different brands of science, such as European psychology as opposed to Icelandic psychology, and so on. Such an assumption flies in the face of the common notion that there is one universal science, which makes indigenous psychologies of various regions appear as ludicrous as Russian physics and Italian chemistry.

Given that the present study intends to draw on ideas across disciplines, historical periods, and cultures, it is necessary to examine the problems arising from attempts to close such gaps. It is also necessary to discuss such issues as the unity of science, absolutism versus relativity of knowledge, univocalism versus pluralism, and so on before beginning with specific views of person, self, and identity. The remainder of the chapter is therefore devoted to the discussion of such issues.

On Closing The Historical, Disciplinary, And Cultural Gaps In The Study of the Self

It is not uncommon in contemporary psychological literature on the self to trace crucial ideas to William James. For many, the history of psychology simply means the history of modem, scientific psychology starting with James; relatively few try to trace the history of psychology back to the Age of Enlightenment, let alone to ancient Greece. It is a matter of common knowledge in the field of psychology that students are expected to make sure their reading lists are current; too many references to work published more than 5 years ago is seen as a sign of being "dated." T. H. Leahey (1987) has rightly chosen the terms *Whig* and *presentism* to characterize the attitudes of contemporary psychologists. "A Whig account of history," says Leahey, "sees history as a series of progressive steps leading up to our current state of enlightenment" (p. 29). The present state of knowledge, or the "state of the art" ostensibly represented by the latest journal articles, is *ipso facto* considered to be the best on earth. Anyone who wants to draw attention to insights of ancient origin must work his or her way against such an antihistorical stance. Ironically, we must turn to the historical origins of presentism itself so as to understand the source of strength behind the Whiggishness of our times.

The Old Versus New Models of the Self: Closing The Historical Gap

One specific aspect of the history of European thought that seems to have contributed to presentism is Hegel's view of history. G. W. E Hegel (1770–1831) viewed knowledge, philosophy, and consciousness – indeed, the entire reality – as perpetually moving forward through the cosmic process of "Becoming." The transformation of a bud into a flower, and then a fruit, is a common instance of

Becoming. It is as if the present state of anything is like a "thesis" that naturally invokes its dialectical opposite, or "antithesis;" the two together inevitably lead to their "synthesis," which forms the new thesis —and the cycle continues. Hegel thought that a prior idea, or thesis, does not just vanish but continues by being embedded in a more evolved form of the syntheses, even as a bud gradually transforms itself into a flower and a fruit. We remember our old thoughts, which are subsumed in our current thoughts to which they have led. Likewise, at the global level, Plato's ideas are subsumed in Aristotle's, which are in turn subsumed into Kant's and Hegel's, and so on. The human mind as well as the cosmic Spirit are in a perpetual process of Becoming, such that there is no return of the present to the past, from the flower to the bud. This view implied a unidirectional view of time that necessarily marches from past through present to the future toward progress.4

Auguste Comte (1830/1970) transformed this idea of the historical process of the development of knowledge into a universal law. Comte's "law" suggested that knowledge in any field passes through three successively superior stages of development: theological, metaphysical, and scientific or "positive." What Comte meant by *theological* was animistic thinking that attributes events in nature to the actions and whims of deities that control the wind, rain, and other such phenomena. In the next, *metaphysical* stage, events are explained in terms of causes understood as abstract forces. In the final, *positive* stage, an attempt is made to accurately describe natural events rather than causally explain them, so that knowledge of their regularities can be used to human advantage, as in the case of Galileo's studies of motion. Many modem psychologists seem to assume Comte was right; like B. E Skinner, they try to accurately describe behavior as a means of establishing control over it, shun metaphysics as a useless endeavor, and either view the self as a dreadful relic of the theologian's "soul" or dismiss it as "a vestige of animism" (see Skinner, 1974, p. 167).

Writing in Germany about a century after Comte enunciated his law of the three stages, Max Scheler (n.d./1970) criticized it, arguing that theological, metaphysical, and scientific are types of knowledge rather than *stages* of its development. According to Scheler, the three types rest on three different kinds of human motives and aims, involve three different "groups of acts of the knowing mind," and are relevant to three different personality types. The theological or religious type aims at salvation, involves the hoping, fearing, and loving mind, and addresses the "homo religious" or a saint. By contrast, the metaphysical knowledge aims at wisdom, is motivated by wonder, involves "essence-envisioning" type of reasoning, and is compatible with a sage or an intellectual type of personality. Scientific knowledge, as distinguished from these other types of knowledge, seeks to observe regularities in nature so as to be able to predict and control them, involves observation and inductive and deductive reasoning, and attracts the curious types of persons who are not particularly keen to be heroes or saints. What Scheler's typology suggests is that it is important to raise the issue of "knowledge

for what?" In our times, Jürgen Habermas (1968/1971) asked basically the same sort of question and has suggested "critical" and "emancipatory" interests in the search of knowledge as distinguished from the "technical" interest of scientific knowledge. The *emancipatory* interest, as reflected in psychoanalysis, tries to relieve humans from being oppressed by unconscious motives, while in Marxist analysis it aims to emancipate the masses from political and economic exploitation. Habermas points out the irony that Comte's positivism, which tried to make science immune from philosophical critique, itself started as a historical analysis and a philosophical critique of knowledge. Seen from Scheler's or Habermas's point of view, it is important to understand the differing goals that prompt a search for knowledge. Rychlak (1981, pp. 28–29) points out that the different theories of personality in vogue today are guided to greater or lesser degree by scholarly, curative, or "ethical" interest; meaning striving to attain values such as "self-realization." There is a common expression in Sanskrit: *"sā vidyā yā vimuktaye,"* which may be paraphrased to mean that the purpose of knowledge is to seek liberation. This stance stands in sharp contrast with the behaviorist view of psychology aimed at the control of behavior. Given such diversity in their goals, it makes sense to understand theories in terms of their explicit or implicit goals, and to evaluate them in terms of the degree to which they help realize their respective goals. Whether a theory is modem or antique is irrelevant if one wishes to understand and evaluate theories in this manner.

Self-knowledge and Disciplinary Divisions

Ancient thinkers in both India and Europe did not distinguish between philosophy, psychology, and other disciplines as we currently do. To some extent, the divisions are peaceful territorial arrangements that mark off specific sets of phenomena — the weather, animals, culture, and so on — as legitimate domains of study for specific groups of specialists. Although highly useful and necessary in managing the vast expansion of knowledge, the disciplinary divisions have fractionated the community of scholars into separate groups that are often guarded and fortified in the form of rival academic departments competing for grants and prestige. Even within the domain of the study of the self, specific aspects are delineated as special areas for related disciplines. Thus, the sociologists are supposed to study the social aspects of the self and anthropologists the cultural imprint on it, while social psychologists focus on its interpersonal dimensions, and so on. While such specialization seems to provide more complementarity than conflict, approaches to the problem of identity is fairly sharply divided between the disciplines of philosophy and psychology, and there is little communication between them.

Part of the problem in this regard is a result of the particular history of modem psychology, namely its historical development as a rebel child of philosophy and

its attempt to move close to the natural sciences and away from the humanities. Moreover, J. B. Watson (1913), the father of behaviorism, portrayed philosophy as "armchair speculation," contrasting it with the "science" of psychology, which is dedicated to solving practical problems through behavioral "technology." Such characterization was congenial to the pragmatic Zeitgeist of America, and contributed to the negative image of philosophy among psychologists. Self, like consciousness, was declared out of bounds for the "science" of psychology not only because it was unobservable, but because "idle" speculation about such issues was irrelevant to psychology's practical goal of controlling behavior. Moreover, the intellectual ancestry of postmedieval Western conceptions of the self was the theologian's "soul." Against the background of the long-drawn conflict between the developing science and the Christian church since the days of Galileo's inquisition, for many a modem psychologist the self was too tainted a topic to deserve serious attention.[5] Max Meyer (1922), an early behaviorist, wrote in his introductory psychology text that "Thruout [sic] history we find religion being spread by fire and sword, by torture and death. Innumerable human lives were sacrificed in order that souls be saved" (p. 410). As a reaction to this history, Meyer ruled the soul and its ostensible successor, the self, out of bounds for psychology. To emphasize this expulsion, Meyer titled his book, *Psychology of the Other-One,* and decades later, Skinner (1974, p. 13) followed this lead.

Given this background, an antiphilosophical and antireligious stance has been common (although not totally pervasive) in modem psychology. This creates problems in a dialogue on the self between psychologists and philosophers. Psychologists with any connections with religion become deeply suspect in the eyes of many of their colleagues. This situation has obvious implications for any East–West dialogue in psychology, since some of the most important psychological concepts and techniques of Eastern origin were developed by schools of thought closely associated with Buddhism and Hinduism.

To some extent, the separation between philosophical and psychological approaches to self and identity is not illegitimate or totally based on prejudice, insofar as there is a tacit division of labor between them. Thus, while contemporary Western philosophers look at the problem of identity as primarily a puzzle to solve with the help of logic, most psychologists view it as a matter of human experience open to empirical investigation and/or introspective analysis. For instance, in their writings, David Wiggins (1967) and Derek Parfit (1971/1975, 1986) concoct varied scenarios in which brains are transplanted from one person's brain into another's body, someone's memories are accurately replicated, divided into equipotent parts, or transported into another world, and so on. Such thought experiments are inspired by real experiments, such as those of Gazzaniga and Sperry on the bisection of cerebral commissures (Gazzaniga, 1970; Gazzaniga, Bogen, & Sperry, 1962), and often have practical implications for issues in real life. Assume, for instance, that for some strange reason, doctors operate on Mr. A and

Mr. B, and transplant their brains in each other's bodies. Assume further that the operations are partly successful, and B's body wakes up with A's memories, but A's body does not wake up. Under these conditions, would B's body speak and act like A, claiming ownership of A's body and expressing intimacy with Mrs. A? Assuming both A and B have life insurance, who will be considered dead and whose survivors can claim whose inheritance? For many a philosopher, such a fictitious example is a means to clarify the role of memory in maintaining a sense of self-sameness. For some others, such as Kathleen Wilkes (1988), the flight of fancy in such thought experiments is useless; we should rather study real people. Psychologists usually have little patience for any discussion of ontological or ethical issues concerning the problem of personal identity; they would rather conduct empirical studies of memory or develop clinical techniques to deal with patients suffering from amnesia.

Indeed, this applied orientation of the modem psychologists makes Yoga and Vedanta more compatible with psychology than "philosophy" as understood in the modem sense; that is, as primarily a logical rather than empirical inquiry with a "pure" as opposed to an "applied" orientation. Yoga and Vedanta are systems of philosophy that deal with ontological and epistemological issues like their Western counterparts. However, they are also different from most systems of Western philosophy in having "applied" components in the form of sophisticated programs for attaining higher levels of fulfillment through profound self-knowledge. Interest in transforming one's own personality distinguishes Vedanta and Yoga from Westem models of philosophy. While Vedanta and Yoga prompt personal projects aimed at self-realization, most systems of Western philosophy remain impersonal and purely theoretical enterprises. In this regard, Indian philosophy is somewhat similar to the "cultivation of the self" practiced by Greek and Roman philosophers, as described by Michel Foucault (1984/1986). At any rate, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1984), the Advaita Vedantic model of self-realization parallels Maslow's self-actualization model; both of them present us with somewhat different but complementary ideals of what modem psychologists call "positive mental health" and higher levels of fulfillment (Coan, 1977). As well, Yoga suggests means to realize human potentials in a manner parallel to the psychologists of the "human potential movement" in modem psychology (Otto, 1966; Drury, 1989). Such parallels legitimize the comparison between modem Western psychology and the traditional Indian systems like Yoga and Vedanta regardless of the many differences among them.

The Cross-Cultural Context: On Bridging The East–West Gap

Modem psychology, at least as it is taught in most universities around the world today, is mostly a Western or Euro-American product. Psychology as taught in most third world countries as well as in Japan also bears an indelible Euro-

American stamp. The Eurocentric character of psychology and its attendant limitations in their application to the non-Western world have been known at least since the 1920s, when pioneering anthropologists from Europe and America started to use the Freudian model in their studies of various "primitive" cultures around the world. The anthropologist Malinowski (1927/1953), for instance, complained that Freud's model was inappropriate in understanding matriarchal societies, in that, he argued, children's ambivalent feelings for their fathers typical of Oedipus complex result primarily in European societies where the father is both a provider as well as a disciplinarian. This condition does not obtain in "mother right" societies where the father is not the disciplining authority. If this analysis is correct, then the Freudian view of the pervasive intrapsychic conflict must have limited cross-cultural applicability. Limitations imposed on psychological theories and methods arising from their cultural background should be a matter of concern in cross-cultural psychology, where concepts and methods of Euro-American origin are applied to cultures around the world.

Malinowski was concerned about the bias arising from studying cultures from the vantage point of one's own culture, and recommended that anthropologists try to look at alien cultures from the "native's point of view." In the field of cross-cultural psychology, John Berry (1969) drew the attention of his colleagues to Malinowski's recommendation. Following the distinction between phonemics, which deals with features specific to a language, as opposed to phonetics, which is concerned with the universal features common to all languages, Berry suggested the use of the terms *emic* and *etic* to distinguish, respectively, between the culturally limited versus universal psychological theories. Given the overall focus of contemporary psychology on obtaining quantifiable data with the help of paper-and-pencil tests, the issue of "applicability" is centered mainly around translation, validation, and other methodological issues relating to psychological tests. Although the importance of understanding the world from the native's viewpoint is recognized, its scope is restricted to such specific matters as avoiding obvious misunderstanding of test items. The "variables" to be measured are assumed to be "real" and universal, and their meaning is defined almost exclusively in the context of Euro-American beliefs and values. Rarely does an experimenter dare to ask the subjects what they think of the test or the study as a whole. The cross-cultural psychologists rarely ask their subjects whether the issues under investigation and the methods of study make any sense from the indigenous (i.e., natives') viewpoint. Usually the psychologists of the Third World origins are either already Westernized or make little effort in adopting the worldview of the native culture in looking at the experiment or its theory as a whole. The non-Western people are treated primarily as a large subject pool from which to obtain data, their contribution to psychology being restricted to the role of guinea pigs in testing imposed Eurocentric emics. Psychological insights of non-Western cultures are implicitly assumed to be either nonexistent or protoscientific at the best. Many issues

regarding contemporary cross-cultural psychology have been discussed in detail in recent work (Paranjpe, Ho, & Rieber, 1988), making it unnecessary to discuss them here, except for a historical perspective on the mutual understanding of India and Europe.

The basic problems of cross-cultural understanding are not new; they began when people of one culture started to raid, trade, or communicate with people of other lands. Many of the same age-old general problems of intercultural contact reflect in relatively new forms relevant to the changing conditions. Today's cross-cultural psychologists seem to narrowly focus on problems of their methods of investigation — mostly questionnaires and psychological tests — mostly to the neglect of the other, broader, and more persistent problems. In my opinion, their narrowness of focus results from ahistoricism and "methodolatry" (excessive emphasis on methodology) typical of the investigative practices of contemporary psychology (Danziger, 1990). Notable exceptions to such narrowness are the recent works of Ashish Nandy (1983), Durganand Sinha (1986) and David Ho (1988), all of whom have discussed various aspects of the history of the British empire relevant to psychology in postcolonial societies. Sinha, for instance, points out (as many others before him) that the educational policies of the British Raj as laid down by Macaulay (1835/1972) were effective in inculcating a mentality among educated Indians that held European worldviews in high esteem, often at the expense of indigenous viewpoints on many issues. In an earlier publication (Sinha, 1965), he castigates fellow Indian psychologists for turning their backs on their own cultural heritage. In his work, Ho points out in a blunt manner some of the pernicious aspects of the postcolonial mentality on psychology in modern Asia: the sense of superiority of the colonizing cultures and the reciprocal sense of inferiority of the colonized shared on both sides. He points out how the colonial mentality has survived decades after the colonial rule was dissolved, and how it affects the dialogue among psychologists in the European and Third World societies.

Regardless of the fact that the above-mentioned authors have directly spoken about the effect of the colonial context on the study of psychology, it is my impression that psychologists have remained largely oblivious to the lively debate on postcolonial issues (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1995) prompted by, among others, Edward Said's (1978) influential work entitled *Orientalism.* This discourse could shed light on some of hidden dimensions of cross-cultural studies in psychology. The main issue relevant in this context is the varied ways in which cross-cultural understanding in the late 20th century is shaped by the power differential between the formerly colonized and colonizing cultures. Keeping this broader issue in mind, I shall focus here on how the history of the mutual understanding of India and Europe has affected the nature of psychological studies in India in the postcolonial era. In my view, the recent work of the Indologist Wilhelm Halbfass (1981/1988) is most valuable in placing the issues in the

historical perspective. He has given an overview of the intellectual exchange between India and Europe spanning two and a half millennia in a single volume titled *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding.* In the next section, I shall follow his analysis of the history of the transcontinental exchange of ideas.

EAST–WEST DIALOGUE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Unlike the oceans that separate the Americas from Europe, there is a large landmass that connects Europe with Asia. Throughout the known history, there has been constant communication across this landmass; numerous people of each generation have traversed on foot or horseback to satisfy their drive for trade, conquest, or proselytization, "sight-seeing," seeking specialized knowledge, and so on. Many of the innumerable traders, soldiers, and travelers must have carried ideas along with their "baggage" to and from their home and lands of yonder. The first significant intellectual link relevant for our purpose is Pythagoras (ca. 582-507 BC), who is said to have had contacts with the East. His views of the self are recognized as having influenced those of Plato, who in turn influenced the "neo-Platonic" philosophers and their followers through the centuries. Plato's ideas of the tripartite soul[6] roughly resemble the Upanisadic view of the individual as the knower, agent, and enjoyer/sufferer, and there is some similarity between the philosophers, warriors, and traders of Plato's *Republic* and the Hindu castes *(varṇas).* This is not to suggest either a direct Asian influence on Plato or a very close resemblance between Advaita Vedantic and Platonic concepts. The tripartite division of human functioning into cognition, affect, and conation has been a persistent theme of both Western and Indian thinking, and will be discussed in separate chapters to come.

The neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (ca. 205–270CE) provides a clear and more well-known link between the intellectual traditions of India and Europe.' His travels to India in search of the "wisdom of the East" are a matter of historical record. Like Pythagoras before him, Plotinus echoes the monistic principle that very closely resembles the Brahman of Vedānta His contemplative approach and deeply spiritual interests are in tune with several Indian approaches to self-realization. Plotinus's influence on St. Augustine (354–430) is reflected in the introspective approach to spiritual and philosophical matters throughout the Christian tradition that followed him. Augustine's quip, "If I am deceived, so I am," was echoed centuries later by René Descartes's (1596–1650) famous words, "I think, therefore I am." Plotinus's contact with the East suggests an instance of historical exchange of ideas, although the exact nature of the exchange and the degree of mutual influence remains unclear.

A major event that connected ancient India with Greece was the military campaign of Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE) in the northwest region of India. Despite legends of Alexander's conversation with some wise man of India,

and despite extensive contacts between the India and Europe occasioned by Alexander's expedition, no significant exchange of ideas seems to have come about via this Greek connection. A deeper and more lasting connection between India and the Western world was established through the Islamic conquerors coming to India from Turkey, Iran, Mongolia, and various other parts of Asia and the Middle East through the northwest passage. The first Islamic campaign goes back to the early 8th century, followed by waves of tribes and armies, some of which stayed on to establish Islamic hegemony over major parts of India for centuries. Among the many dynasties of Islamic rulers, some patronized artists and scholars. Al-Bīrunī (973 –1048 CE), an astronomer, mathematician, and geogr a-pher associated with the Turkish conquerer Mahmūd of Ghazanī, was one of the first major scholars to study the Indian world seriously (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 25). The Mogul emperor Akbar (1542 –1605) patronized many artists and scholars and took personal interest in their work. Motivated by the aim of consolidating his rule by bridging the religious gap between the Hindus and the Muslims, he tried to create a monotheistic religion based on Islamic, Indian, and Christian elements. But such syncretism was not successful in his own times, let alone in the longer run. Over the centuries, however, many Indian texts were translated into Persian, and some literary classics as well as ideas in astronomy, astrology, medicine, mathematics, and other areas of study were transmitted back and forth between India and Europe via the Middle East. The decimal system of numbers and the game of chess are among many Indian inventions that are known to have been transmitted from India to Europe.

Dara Shukoh emperor Akbar's great grandson, had 50 Upanisads translated into Persian. The translations included excerpts from commentaries by Sarikara, and were completed by 1657. Dārā Shukōh had deep personal interest in and sympathy for the Upanisadic philosophy, and attempted to compare and harmo-nize ideas from Hinduism and Islam in a book entitled *Majma' al-baḥrain* ("Min-gling of oceans") (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 34). Such an approach did not sit well with his brother, Aurangzeb. Claiming that Dārā was "a heretic and danger to the state, the faith and the public order," Aurangzeb ordered his brother's execu-tion a few years after the translation project was completed. Such was the fate of a major attempt at mutual understanding across cultures, and religious fanaticism continues to obstruct attempts at reconciliation at present. Fortunately, Dara's efforts in translations did not go to waste; the finished products were eventually transmitted to Europe, and these were in turn translated into Latin under the title of *Oupnek'hat* by Anquetil Duperron, in 1801–1802. It is this Latin version that reached the hands of Schopenhauer and other European philosophers and elicited great interest in India in the 19th century (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 35).

A more direct contact between India and Europe was established through the sea route reopened by the voyage of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama around 1500. As is well known, the early European voyages to India were moti-

vated by interest in spice trade and in spreading the word of the Gospel. The trading enterprise eventually led to the founding of the British empire, and the nature of mutual understanding between India and Britain during the Raj needs to be considered separately. Before dealing with that issue, it is necessary to examine the way in which the Christian missionaries understood Indian thought. Christianity was introduced in India well before the origin of Papacy, when the apostle St. Thomas is believed to have visited India around 52 CE on the Malabar coast in southern India. A Christian community called the Syrian Christians has lived peacefully and flourished in that area ever since. Serious proselytization began with St. Francis Xavier, the Basque Jesuit missionary in the mid-16th century. Of all the missionaries who worked in India since then, the most important in view of cross-cultural understanding is the Italian Jesuit Roberto de' Nobili (1577–1656).

As noted by Halbfass, Nobili recognized that, if an outsider wants his ideas to be understood by the local people, he must communicate in their language. As he learned to speak and write in Tamil and started to wrestle with translations word by word, he realized that there were some "... basic problems involved in the transmission or transplantation of Christian ideas and concepts into the complex context of Indian religious–philosophical terminology, with its rich associations" (cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 39). Nobili also realized that in understanding an alien culture, it was important to distinguish between its relatively superficial aspects from the deeper ones. In the case of the Hindu culture of his days, for instance, he considered the customs of wearing a sacred thread or a tuft of hair as superficial aspects when compared with the more important one like the Vedantic monism that underlies pantheistic worship. Nobili recognized that beneath what came across as theistic dogma, "the Brahmanic teachings were a primarily secular, natural wisdom" and that "the rule of the Brahmins and their function, as well as their customs and insignia, were mundane and social in nature"; they were "wise men," not idolators or temple priests (cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 41).

Nobili recommended to his fellow missionaries that the proclaimer of the Gospel must be prepared to "set aside the customs of his homeland and to be an Indian among Indians." According to Halbfass, Nobili defended a "hermeneutic and pedagogic pragmatism, which finds parallels in the Jesuit missions of the Far East, by referring to the 'adaptive' traditions of the church" (p. 41). Halbfass adduces evidence suggesting that, when Nobili communicated his views to Portuguese missionaries and the authorities at the Vatican, their reaction was, despite "certain esteem for his methods," predominantly that of "rejection and hostility." Halbfass's overall assessment of Nobili is that "[h]e had no fundamental questions as to the intercultural communicability of his message ... as much as he was willing to make concessions with respect to ways of life, so little was he able to allow Hindu thought to affect the dogmatic substance of his own Christian convictions" (p. 43).

It would be useful to pause here to reflect on the implications of Nobili's work for the mutual understanding of India and Europe in our own times. Today, as in Nobili's days, it is mostly India that is the target of study from a Eurocentric viewpoint, rather than vice versa. Nobili's willingness to look at the culture as a whole and to sift through superficial details and get down to the fundamental principles of culture provides an important lesson. Such willingness is conspicuously absent in cross-cultural psychology, where researchers seem to be obsessed with the methodological minutiae to the neglect of the "big picture."

Nobili's scholarship on Indian matters began to be known in the Christian circles of Europe during the early years of the Age of Enlightenment. But it was not until the later part of the 18th century that the secular European scholars began to become familiar with Indian thought. A few years prior to the publication of Duperron's Latin translation of the Upanisads in 1801–1802, the direct translations of Sanskrit classics into European languages began to appear in England, Germany, and other European countries. By that time, the British traders had already established their presence in Bengal, and their interest in Sanskrit classics had led to the founding of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1874. Wilkin's English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* appeared in 1785, and translations of assorted literary classics began to be published. As is well known, the British "Orientalists" such as W. Jones (1746-1794), C. Wilkins (1749-1836), and T. H. Colebrooke (1765–1837)had positive views about ancient Indian thought, and they helped translate and publicize several Sanskrit texts.

During the late 18th century, many German scholars began to take serious interest in Sanskrit literature. This is rather remarkable in view of the fact that German activities in India were quite limited when compared with those of the British, the French, or the Dutch. Halbfass (1981/1988,p. 69) suggests that, given the increasingly broader and more intensive contacts of Europeans with the non-European world, several European intellectuals of the Age of Enlightenment started to experience a new European self-awareness vis-à-vis alien cultures. This new awareness involved a close acquaintance with and a deep interest in non-European cultural and intellectual traditions, combined with a "motif of criticizing contemporary Christianity and Europe" (p. 69). One of the most prominent among the intellectuals expressing such cultural awareness was the famous German scholar, J. G. Herder (1744–1803).

Herder developed an organic metaphor to understand the development of cultures, suggesting that one mankind developed historically into multiple forms of expression, like one tree trunk developing many branches and twigs. Extending the metaphor of growth, Herder thought of the Oriental cultures as the childhood, Hellenism as adolescence, and the Roman culture as the adulthood of human civilization. The idea that ancient Indian culture represented a pristine state of childlike innocence spread among members of the so-called "Romantic move-

ment" in 19th-century Europe, a movement pioneered by Herder among others. As noted by Halbfass, Herder thought that "[t]he Hindus are the gentlest branch of humanity. They do not with pleasure offend anything that lives ... Moderation and calm, a soft feeling and a silent depth of the soul characterize their work and their pleasure, their morals and mythology, their arts" (Herder's words translated by, and cited in, Halbfass, 1981A988, p. 70). The positive bias of these words is too obvious to need explication. Anyone who knows India should know that, contrary to Herder's impressions, a majority of Indians are not vegetarian, wars and cruelty are not unknown to the Hindus, and unfortunately, the worst forms of indignities were imposed on the untouchables for centuries. Undeserved glorification, although less harmful, is as misguided and stereotypical as the negative forms of prejudice.

Herder was not totally naive about the unflattering aspects of the Hindu society of his times. But he thought of them as manifesting a periodical deterioration of a culture from its pristine state, a temporary downturn. As noted by Halbfass (1981A988, p. 69), it was common among European intellectuals of the Age of Enlightenment to use "abstract categories of progress and degeneration" while speaking of a society as a whole. To think in such terms was a typical feature of the European self-awareness. "Renaissance," "Reformation," and "Age of Reason" were nothing if not indicative of the march to *progress — a* dominant theme of the modern European culture. The history of this concept has been well chronicled by Bury (1932/1960) in his definitive book, The *Idea of Progress.* As shown by Bury, there were numerous variations of this pervasive theme within the European culture. Regardless of such variations of the theme, the idea of progress has commonly implied a *perpetual* process of improvement.[8]

This typically European theme stands in sharp contrast to the notion of the *cyclical* nature of good and bad times that the Hindus have believed in for ages. Throughout the known history of the Hindu culture, humanity has been assumed to go through cycles of four aeonic periods (called the *yugas),* starting with a golden age, of *satya yuga* (literally, the age of truth), followed by three successive periods (the *treta dvapara* and *kali yuga)* of increasing decline and decay. It is interesting to examine the implications of the concepts of progress and deterioration for the European understanding of India. Herder thought that the chart of human progress goes up and down in different regions at different times and, as noted, he interpreted India to have been in (an ostensibly temporary) period of decline. G. W. F. Hegel (1765-1837), who had become well acquainted with India through the German translations of many Sanskrit texts, had a different interpretation. He believed that humanity's steady and unidirectional progress started with ancient China and traveled through India, Western Asia, Greece, and Rome before finally coming to Germany. He thought that it was in Germany, particularly in his own work, that the progress of humanity had ultimately culminated (Bury, 1932/1960, pp. 253–256; Halbfass, 1981/1988, pp. 84*ff).*

Hegel's overall assessment of Indian thought was that, although Indian philosophy was the most advanced in the world in the ancient times, it had nothing to offer to the people of modem Europe. With his overall influence on European thought, this Hegelian view seems to have won popular support. There are some other aspects of Hegel's view of Indian philosophy that need to be considered here. In his view, Indian philosophy is inseparable from religion. He was particularly critical of the Upanisadic concept of Brahman, the single principle that is said to account for the entire reality. Said Hegel: "... the One, just because it is contentless and abstract, because it has not its particularizations in itself, lets them fall outside it, lets them escape in *uncontrolled confusion*" (Hegel, cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 89; emphasis added). In Hegel's assessment, Yoga exemplifies a negative attitude of the mind. It negates the dialectical interplay of subject and object, which is of essence in his own view of self-explication of man in history. Also, Yoga manifests "quietism" and "mysticism," which are diametrically opposed to his own orientation. Halbfass identifies some of Hegel's views of Indian thought in choice phrases: "wild excesses of fantasy," an "unrestrained frenzy," and "rampant chaos of mythological and iconographic details" (p. 89). These Hegelian views of India stand in sharp contrast with those of his junior contemporary Schopenhauer (1788-1860), who said after reading Duperron's Latin translation of the Upanisads that it offered "the most rewarding and edifying reading ... that could be possible in this world; it has been the solace of my life and will be the solace of my death" (Schopenhauer, cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 106). This was clearly a version of the Romantic idealization of India in Herder's tradition. Halbfass has called Schopenhauer Hegel's "antipode" (p. 106).

Against this background of the diametrically opposed views of India and Indian thought, the ideas of certain authors relevant to the present work may be pointed out here. One of them is Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who echoed Hegel in considering European civilization as being more advanced than the Chinese and Indian. In *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,* Husserl (1954/1970) speaks of the "Europeanization of all ... civilizations" (p. 16), specifically mentioning India and China.

According to Husserl (1954/1970), "it was a mistake ... to speak of Indian and Chinese philosophy and science ... in a European way." Although he was convinced that "within their own framework of meaning," their "world-view and world-knowledge remain mythical and practical" (p. 284), Husserl asserted that "only in the Greeks do we have a universal ('cosmological') life-interest in the essentially new form of a purely 'theoretical' attitude" (p. 280). In Husserl's opinion, the purely theoretical spirit, or Greek *theōria* leads to a universal knowledge of the world, whereas the "vocation-like life-interest" of the "Indian, Chinese and similar 'philosophies' " stifles it (p. 280). What Husserl is speaking of here is similar to what modem psychologists call the "value free" stance of scientific inquiry that is open to and aspires to benefit the whole of humanity.

Husserl's view ofpresuming the superiority ofEuropean thought over Indian is not alien to the contemporary discourse in psychology. For instance, recently the psychologist Harry Triandis (1993) said the following in response to an article by Misra and Gergen (1993) in the *International Journal ofPsychology:*

> The argument that contemporary cross-cultural psychology is a Western construction is equivalent to saying that it is science. Modem science is a Western construction. India, when uninfluenced by the West, has produced glorious philosophy and mathematics, but not science. The essence of science is the conversation between theory and data, and the falsification of theory. Traditional Indian culture is incompatible with falsification ... reflections of philosophical monism, make falsification incompatible with its basic values. Therefore, if there is to be an Indian science it has to follow Western patterns (p. 249).

These words not only echo the sense ofthe unquestionable superiority of "Western science" expressed in the writings of Hegel and Husserl, they also tend to perpetuate the stereotype that Eastern and Western ways of thinking are radically different, with exclusive properties of their own. Triandis's suggestion that the distinction between theory and data or the concept of falsification are Western inventions unknown in India is patently false; like many stereotypes and prejudices it is based on appalling ignorance of the concerned subject matter. As I shall explain in some detail later on in this volume, in India there is a long tradition of sophisticated theories of epistemology in which the principle of falsification is explicit and central. Saṅkara for instance, stressed the importance of truth as unfalsified *(abādhita)* cognition as early as the 8th century, a thousand years before the idea of falsificationism was popularized by Sir Karl Popper. It is a supreme irony that Triandis should think of falsification as incompatible with philosophical monism, for it is difficult to find a more committed philosophical monist or a stronger supporter of unfalsified truth than Sankara

At this point it is necessary to stress that the Husserlian judgment of the superiority of the European civilization is based on his understanding, right or wrong, about the typical European and Indian approaches to knowledge, not on widely perceived technical superiority of the Europeans. It is ironic that, on the one hand, the purely theoretical attitude in the tradition of Greek *theoria* is considered superior to the practical approach ofIndian systems like Yoga, while on the other hand European civilization as a whole is considered superior to the Indian because of its successes in practical affairs. Indeed, in the long run, perceptions of superiority and inferiority are shaped more by technical–economic power and political conquest rather than by quaint arguments about excellence of philosophies. As we shall see later in this chapter, typical British attitudes toward Indian thought, as expressed by such British officers as T. B. Macaulay, were shaped not only by the technical superiority of the Europeans, but also by the enormous political power of the British empire. Before turning to that issue, it will be useful to briefly examine the ways in which the Indians viewed the foreigners.

Strange as it may seem, India received more attention and visitors from the outside world than it provided in turn. While the history of the Indian subcontinent provides evidence for a succession of waves of outsiders that came as traders, refugees, or conquerors, there is no record of Indians leaving in hordes to foreign lands before the beginning of the 20th century. Historians speak of the evidence of Indians trading in Egypt and the Mediterranean regions since the ancient times, and there are even occasional references to scholars visiting such areas. Although there is a long history of wars within India, historical accounts of Indian armies marching beyond the northern boundaries of the Indian subcontinent are rare, if any. While foreign travelers to India, like the famous Hsüan-Tsang (ca. 596–664) from China or the Italian Marco Polo (1254-1325), have left behind valuable records of their observations, there are no known records of Indians traveling abroad. Indians have not been known as great seafarers comparable to the Scandinavians and other Europeans, although they probably were well connected to Southeast Asian regions by the sea route for centuries. Interestingly, the influence of Indian culture did spread to a major part of southeast Asia, as is evident in Thailand and Indonesia, particularly Bali. Moreover, Buddhism, which originated in Nepal and once flourished in India, became the major religion in Asia. Many Buddhist monks and scholars have been known to have gone to remote regions of Tibet and the Far East, and some of them translated Buddhist texts into various Asian languages. Emperor Aśoka (3rd century BC) even tried to spread the message of Buddhism through edicts inscribed in Greek and Aramaic. However, the Hindus did not send "missionaries" to the outside world until Swami Vivekananda visited in the United States in 1893 to attend the international conference on religion held in Chicago.

In his survey of the intellectual encounter between India and Europe, Halbfass (1981/1988, p. 172) observes that, while Europeans took the initiative to come to and try understand India, the Indians did little reciprocally; at least this is true for centuries up to the 20th. Halbfass (p. 187) has pointed out instances of "Indocentrism" reflected in "orthodox" Hindu thought. It is widely recognized that through the centuries Indian thinkers learned from foreigners *(mlecchas)* a variety of ideas in astronomy, mathematics, music, and other fields. Although such ideas were incorporated into their repertoire of the sciences, arts, and crafts, Indian thinkers seemed to be keen to avoid any foreign influence on their religious and spiritual ideas. Although Indians accommodated the practice of Christianity in Kerala since one of Christ's apostles, Thomas, visited the southern coast of India, there is little sign of its impact on religious thought in India. Despite Akbar and Dārā Shukoh's efforts in bringing together Islamic and Hindu ideas, and notwithstanding the efforts of saints such as Kabīr to develop amity between Hindus and Muslims, Hindus found little to adopt from Islamic thought. Although Aristotle's ideas were known to the Islamic world, there was no impact of the same on Indian thought through either Greek or Islamic sources. I often wonder why none of the

Greek invaders or visitors could not introduce Plato or Aristotle's ideas into the mainstream ofIndian thought, and had they been known to Śaṅkara's how he would have reacted to them. Given the deep impact on European and Christian thought made by Aristotle's works recovered from their Arabic translations, it is tempting to speculate that Śaṅkara's acquaintance with such sources would have made a deep impact on the mutual understanding of India and Europe.

Leaving aside such indulgence in fancy, it would be important to note that numerous Sanskrit scholars who worked in Dārā Shukōh's project of translating the Upanisads in Persian, or others who encountered Persian or Arabic scholars, hardly made any reference to foreign ideas in their work. A crucial issue in terms of the mutual understanding between India and Europe is the typical Indian attitudes toward differences in general, and differences between themselves and the foreigners in particular. It appears that the dominant attitude toward differences in philosophical and religious matters is that of tolerance. There are a few observations that speak to this. First, the major religions originating in the Indian subcontinent, whose followers rarely compromised in regard to their doctrinal differences, generally expressed their rivalries in either keen philosophical debates or more constructively in attempting to excel over the rivals in tangible pursuits. For instance, the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains have often built their places of worship next to each other and have tried to architecturally outclass their rivals, rather than destroy each others' temples, as many Muslims did. The doctrinal differences among them often have led to "refereed" philosophical debates among proponents of rival viewpoints rather than bloodletting, as in the case of the Vedantist Śaṅkara's keenly contested debate with Maṇḍanamiśra, a protagonist of the rival school of (Pūrva) Mīmāṁsā

It appears that the typical Indian way of dealing with differences in ways of worship was to create a pantheon that found a place for any number of deities and their uncountable manifestations. An exceptionally rich mythology was created, apparently to unify the diverse deities by portraying them as varied incarnations of a central triad[9] of gods and their consorts. This is how, it seems, that indigenous "tribal" religions as well as immigrant groups from outside were assimilated in a relatively peaceful coexistence of diverse religious practices and "ethnic" subcultures. Moreover, there has been a long tradition of writing concordances of worldviews, or compendia of summaries of a wide variety of "visions" *(darśana)* of the world. Sāyaṇa-Mādhava's (ca. 1295 – 1386) *Sarvadarśana-Saṁgraha* (1978) (literally, a compendium of all "visions" or systems of philosophy) is a well-known example of such compendia. It includes an account of monists and dualists, materialists and idealists, the orthodox and the heterodox, theists as well as atheists, who are unyielding in their insistence on major as well as minor doctrinal differences. But there are no signs in most traditional philosophical literature about the awareness of philosophies of non-Indian origin. Moreover, there are clear examples of prominent scholars expressing contempt for foreign ideas and dismissing them outright.

One such example is Śankara's follower, Madhusudana Sarasvati, who around the year 1600 may have had contacts with the court of emperor Akbar's court. Halbfass (1981/1988, pp. 186–187) notes that in his work, *Prasthānabheda* in which he tries to harmonize the different schools of thought of rival paths *(prasthāna)* to liberation, Madhusudana does not include even the Buddhists, let alone any other worldviews that may have been known to the Sanskrit scholars through the Persian or Chinese scholars. It appears that, as suggested by Halbfass, Madhusudana seems to simply take for granted that the Buddhist approaches are invalid. I find this ironic, given that Sankara has been called a Buddhist in disguise *(pracchanna Bauddha)* by proponents of rival schools of Vedānta.[10] What, then, could be the reason for such exclusion? As noted, the Hindus were adopting, or seriously considering, foreign ideas in relation to technical matters. Halbfass suggests (pp. 182*ff)* the most crucial criterion for exclusion of ideas is their relevance for religiomoral issues (covered under the concept of *dharma)* or the "soteriological" matters (i.e., pertaining to *mokṣa,* the liberation of the soul). Surveying the historical reactions of Indians against foreigners, Halbfass (1981/1988) says: "As for the *dharma* and the path to final liberation, there can be no compromise with the *mlecchas"* (p. 186). He quotes the well-known scholar Vācaspatimiśra (ca. 9th–10th century), who heaps the deepest scorn on the *mlecchas* by calling them "scum of mankind and akin to the animals."[11] Indeed, Vācaspatimiśra dismisses the Buddhist doctrines, saying that they cannot be taken seriously simply because they are popular among such lowly creatures as the *mlecchas.*

Halbfass's assessment of Indian attitudes toward foreigners is bound to be controversial, but we need not enter into such a controversy. What is relevant for us here in regard to the hermeneutic encounter between India and the West is the point that Halbfass makes regarding the fundamental significance of India's lack of interest in, and the neglect of, the intellectual horizons of foreigners. Its relevance for the cross-cultural understanding of Indian and Western conceptions of the self should now be clear. First, it is important to recognize that Indocentrism must be recognized to be as deep-rooted and vexatious a problem as Eurocetrism. The long histories of ethnocentric tendencies on both side must be overcome if we aim at genuine mutual understanding. Second, the traditional Indian neglect of alien perspectives makes it difficult to develop a mutual understanding in our times, for it is so much more difficult to bring together streams that have been allowed to drift apart for so many centuries. Third, as we shall see later, the concepts of self and identity that developed in India are most relevant to the goal of the liberation of the soul: the very matter in which Indian scholars seemed to so adamantly avoid foreign influence. Fourth, this very matter, called "soteriological" in the West, has been assigned to theology in the Christian tradition, and theology is a field for which modem academics, particularly psychologists, have cultivated a sense of disdain, if not outright contempt. It is best to try to confront the problems head-on, rather than shove the problems under the rug, so to speak. At any rate, the days

of isolationism on either side seem to be over; there is at least a significant minority of psychologists in both India and the West that is willing to look sympathetically and constructively at the other side.

The era of Indian isolation began to end during the late 18th century, when the British started to establish their influence in Bengal. At the time when the pioneering British Orientalists began to learn Sanskrit, some Indian scholars began to learn English and became closely acquainted with foreign worldviews. This was the first time that Indian intellectuals began to understand themselves in the light of alien perspectives. The most prominent among the Indian intellectuals well versed in alien thought was Rammohan Roy (1772–1833). With the close connections of his family with the Nabob of Bengal, Rammohan learned Persian and Arabic, became familiar with the Koran, and even did some writing in Persian before undertaking a serious study of important Sanskrit texts in Benares. Developing close contact with some of the British officers of the East India Company, he mastered English and became well acquainted with the European thought of his times. His deep knowledge of many languages and religions helped him to see the world very differently when compared with many of his contemporaries, both Indian and British.

Over the years Rammohan became selectively critical of both Hinduism and Hindu customs on the one side, and Christianity and European culture on the other. Thus, he led a social reform movement against the Hindu practices like the *sati,* a custom whereby young widows self-immolated on their husbands' funeral pyre. In recognition of his efforts in reforming the Indian society, Rammohan earned the reputation as the "father of modern India." He criticized idol worship not because of acceptance of Christian or Islamic prohibition of idolatry, but because he found it incompatible with the Upanisadic principle of the formless Brahman as absolute truth. Rejecting both Christianity on the one hand and such Hindu practices as idol worship on the other, he started a new religious movement called the *Brahma Samāj* in 1828. We need not elaborate here on the Hindu revivalist movements like the Brahma Samāj and Swami Dāyananda *Saraswatī's Ārya* Samāj based on Vedic principles (founded in 1875); we only need to note their common hermeneutic implication: Despite the many differences between them, they manifest anew cultural self-awareness of India based on the indigenous intellectual tradition. Both the Brahma Samāj and Ārya Samāj started to *reinrerpret* ancient principles in the new sociocultural context, keeping in mind the increasing influence of the Western worldview.

This should bring us to the establishment of the British hegemony in India across the Indian subcontinent in the early 1800s, and the introduction of a European educational system that completely transformed the Indian culture and intellectual self-understanding. In 1834, the General Committee on Public Education appointed by the British authorities in India was divided between the Orientalists, who argued in favor of Sanskrit and Arabic, as well as English, as the medium

of higher education in India, as opposed to the Anglicists, who wanted only English. As is well known, the Anglicist position espoused by T. B. Macaulay's famous *Minute on Indian Education* won over the Orientalists and shaped the educational system in India throughout the British Raj for over a century.

In his *Minute,* Macaulay (1835/1972) spoke of the "intrinsic superiority of the Western literature" (p. 241) and ridiculed stories of Hindu gods and goddesses. While advocating the teaching of "European science" at the public expense, he dismissed the Orientalist proposal for the inclusion of indigenous traditional learning in the following words: "What we spend on Arabic and Sanskrit colleges is not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth: it is the bounty-money paid to raise up champions of error" (p. 246). Moreover, he proposed that the aim of the British educational policy in India should be to "do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect..." (p. 249). Macaulay's words are too transparent — indeed, blunt — to need comment. The policies of the British government that they helped define went a long way toward attaining Macaulay's goal. English education *did* create a class of intellectuals who were completely Anglicized and Westernized in their worldviews. Even after 50 years of independence, curricula are based on Eurocentric models. As far as psychology is concerned, most university curricula indicate little awareness of the country's rich intellectual legacy in psychological matters.

Against this background, the name of the philosopher Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (1875–1949) emerges as an outstanding scholar who mastered both Indian and Western philosophy and clearly and forcefully articulated the insidious implications of the common Indian acceptance of British education and its attendant worldview. Speaking to an audience of students in Bengal around 1931, when the Indian movement for political self-determination was in full swing, he cautioned that the uncritical acceptance of the superiority of the British in the sphere of ideas was far more insidious than accepting the political dominance. In his view, ignoring the distinctive intellectual legacy of India would amount to "slavery of the spirit" (Bhattacharyya, 1931/1954, p. 103), which should not be allowed to happen while trying to win political independence. Bhattacharyya did not say this with an Indocentric spirit oblivious to foreign scholarship; indeed, he cautioned his compatriots of blind faith in tradition and obscurantism resulting from it. He was a dedicated scholar who earned great reputation for his mastery of not only classical Indian thought but also of Western philosophy. In particular, he distinguished himself as a foremost authority on Kantian philosophy and he cautioned the hidden dangers in Kant's appeal to universal reason. "It is sometimes forgotten by the advocates of universalism," he said, "that the so-called universalism of reason or of religion is only in the making and cannot be appealed to as an actually established code of universal principles" (Bhattacharyya, 1931/1954, p. 111).[12]

A careful reading of Bhattacharyya's writings makes it clear that he dis-

played a great social psychological insight about the subtle use of ideology in the game of cultural domination. In Politics of Identity, Peter du Preez (1980) describes what he calls the "con"a kind of an ideological con game in which the dominant culture tries to instill a sense of inferiority among people of the culture to help perpetuate its domination. "A con succeeds," says du Preez, "when we manoeuvre others into accepting an identity frame in which they are inferior to us. An identity con is one of the attempts rulers make to substitute symbolic for physical force. Cons are best attempted from positions of power; they survive an equalization of power between the parties for a very brief period, if at all" (p. 73). The only thing wrong with du Preez's analysis, it seems to me, is his estimation of the duration of the effects of a con game, for those of Macaulay's have clearly lasted for about half a century after India became independent. More Indians now send their children voluntarily to English medium schools than in the colonial days, and the teaching and learning of Sanskrit is in a worse state today than it was under the British rule. It is to his great credit that Bhattacharyya was trying to invoke self-respect and confidence in the indigenous intellectual tradition during the days when India was deeply involved in fighting against a demoralizing foreign domination. He rightly cautioned against the subtle use of a call to universal reason as a red herring. This point needs closer analysis.

The call to universalism is as strong today as it was over 60 years ago. Only names have changed; what they then referred to as "universal reason" we now call "unity of science." In the early 1970s, when I began to speak about psychological concepts of Indian origin to my fellow psychologists in India, I was seen as advocating an "Indian psychology." This, I was told, was as ridiculous as Russian physics or Belgian chemistry. Bhattacharyya cautioned us then that universal reason was only a promissory note, not an actuality, and we must now realize that unity of science was a dream of the logical positivists of the 1930s; and it remains a dream even today. The project for a unified science has been abandoned; indeed, the logical positivist movement that launched it has itself been pronounced dead by historians of philosophy (Passmore, 1967, p. 56).[13] It is widely recognized in cross-cultural psychology today that theories of psychology that were presumed to be universal are but Eurocentric emics limited by the culture of their origin (Berry, 1969). However, they also seem to believe that, as they keep testing their imposed emics on various cultures and keep fixing those aspects that prove to be culture specific, one day they will metamorphose into an etic, or universal psychology. Etic psychology is not only a promissory note, like Kantian universal reason and the positivist grand scheme of unified science, but it is a mere dream. It must be a dream because science is not and can never be an island unto itself; it must be part of some sociocultural context and be ensconced in its overall worldview. To conceive of a culture-free etic psychology is to think of a being in a boat untouched by the water in which it floats.

In his review of the mutual understanding of India and Europe, Halbfass was

acutely aware of the difficulty in, or rather the impossibility of, absolute cultural neutrality. While trying to attain balance in his presentation with a "commitment to, and distance from, the Indian and European sources," he did not want to "pursue the evasive and vacuous goal of absolute neutrality and impartiality." "Our survey," he said, "is itself part of the unfolding and continuing historical and hermeneutical processes with which it deals" (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 174). With this realization, it will be useful to examine how the ideal of a culture- and value-free, universal, and univocalist science of psychology arose in the intellectual history of Europe and what philosophers of science think of it today. For it is the notion of a univocal psychology unified with a single body of unified science against which claims to a variety of psychologies—justified on cultural, epistemological, or whatever other grounds—will have to be established. This brings us to the topic of the next section.

Univocalism, Relativism, and Pluralism in Psychological Theory

There is a long history in the Western intellectual tradition of concepts similar to that of the "unity of science." Robert McRae (1973) traces the roots of such ideas to Plato and Aristotle and follows its development up to Kant. He points out a set of common themes around which various thinkers tried from time to time to organize the universe of knowledge into a single unified system: unity of the principles of science, of subject matter, of method, or of its purpose (a teleological unity). Francis Bacon, for instance, tried to unify various fields of knowledge under one subject matter, the laws of nature, and one purpose, namely controlling nature for "the relief of man's estate" (Bacon, 1605/1859a, p. 294). By comparison, Kant tried to unify science on the principle of reason, namely the ostensibly universal "categories of the understanding." The well-known model of the unity of science proposed by Rudolph Carnap (1938/1949) and other members of the Vienna Circle can be seen as the latest version in the long line of approaches identified by McRae. It attempted to blend the rival epistemologies of the British empiricism of Bacon, Locke, and Hume on the one hand, and the Continental rationalism of Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant on the other. The implicit idea that psychology must be a single, universally applicable body of knowledge, which prevails in psychology today, may be viewed against the backdrop of the aforementioned history of ideas in Western thought.

The Univocalist versus Pluralist Approaches to Psychology

Behaviorist approaches to psychology, which developed in a loose alliance with the intellectual movement of logical positivism (Smith, 1986), generally adopted a univocalist stance. J. B. Watson (1913) is perhaps the first one to

emphatically proclaim that psychology must adopt the methods of natural science and no others, and saw it as a branch of the natural sciences. In contrast with this methodological behaviorism of Watson, the philosopher Carl Hempel (1935/1949) suggested "logical behaviorism" based on the argument that the metaphysical distinction between mind and body is false, and that the distinction between natural and human sciences is therefore unnecessary. Rudolph Carnap (1938/1949) argued that the statements of all sciences, including those of psychology, can be translated into, or reduced to, those of physics, and proposed an ambitious program for the unity of science based on this principle of reduction.

It is difficult to find a psychologist who argues as explicitly as Carnap (1932-33/1959) for a univocal psychology to be unified with knowledge modeled after physics. However, S. S. Stevens's (1935) attempt to provide operational definitions of psychological concepts did much to try to translate psychological concepts in the "protocol language" as suggested by the logical positivists. Regardless of the merits of operationism, which remain controversial, operationism became a creed of psychology; it gave the impression to many psychologists that they had finally found a way to bring psychology on a par with physics. Over the years, the Carnapian vision of the unity of science became highly influential, silently reflecting itself in the way in which psychologists perceived the place of their discipline in relation to other disciplines. For instance, in their well-known text on the systems of psychology, Marx and Hillix (1973) place psychology in a hierarchy of disciplines that reduce psychological explanations successively into those of biology, biochemistry, chemistry, and ultimately physics. A model of fields of knowledge ordered hierarchically in a grand scheme of reducing all abstract, molar, and complex systems ultimately to the subatomic level has been relatively invisible, perhaps because it is simply taken for granted. The success of this program of ordering and unifying of scientific knowledge is a debatable issue. Nevertheless, it promoted the univocalist ideal, and the prestige of physics as the "queen of sciences" remained extremely high. It is reflected, for instance, in Thomas Kuhn's (1970) view that psychology's lack of a common theoretical framework indicates its protoscientific status similar to pre-Newtonian physics. Commitment to univocalism and the idealization of physics are more tacit than explicit, but are pervasive. It is against this background that approaches to psychology grounded in particular cultures are denigrated by comparing them to the ludicrous notion of Russian physics or German chemistry.

Notwithstanding the highly cherished ideal of univocalism and unity, the discipline of psychology is in fact hopelessly divided from within. It has been said to be "a melange of sciences, technologies, professions, arts, epistemologies, and philosophies — many of them but distantly related to each other — all called 'Psychology' " (Krech, 1970, quoted in Staats, 1983, p. 235). The disunity of psychology is not only a fact but a matter of great concern to many. According to Staats

(1983), the problem of disunity has reached a crisis proportion. Following Kuhn (1970), he views the lack of unity in psychology as suggestive of its *preparadigmatic* status and proposes several ways for unification. A group is said to have been formed to help unite psychology under a single paradigm. This seems to be a laudable goal, for life would ostensibly be simpler if one language were to replace the cacophony of the many tongues of Babel heard in psychology today.

We need to be cautious in this respect, however, since the logical positivist idea suggesting the language of physics as *the* language for all sciences has clearly failed. The cross-cultural psychologists' attempt to formulate a universal, etic psychology would appear to be a variation of the theme of unification articulated by Carnap and Staats. However, the divisions in psychology that Staats and other unificationists are trying to integrate —behaviorist, cognitive, psychodynamic, Gestalt, and similar other models —have developed within the same Western cultures, not in diverse cultures from around the world. Some, like Allportian and Skinnerian theories of personality, for instance, grew within not only the same cultural milieu, but side by side under a common roof in the same university. The plurality of approaches to psychological theory clearly is not the result of cultural or regional differentiation, but rather of differing commitments of their proponents to different ontologies, epistemologies, values, and goals. A program for unification implicitly modeled after the logical positivist program, for instance, cannot be accomplished by imposing particular ontological and epistemological doctrines.

Given that logical positivism was staunchly opposed to metaphysics, it is indeed very ironic that many positivists were committed to physicalism, which is but a metaphysical doctrine. Ernst Mach (1838-1916), whose ideas inspired many a positivist, was against metaphysics. He adopted a phenomenalist approach that rejected Cartesian metaphysics. He assumed that both "things" and their perceptions are constituted by sensations that are neutral with respect to the ontological categories of mind and matter.[14] Following Mach, Skinner, too, rejected metaphysics. But his constant attacks on "mentalism" (Skinner, 1974), and his insistence on "physical" causes (1953, pp. 29 –31) leave him squarely in the physicalist camp. Similarly, Carl Hempel (1935/1949), like other logical positivist followers of Mach, not only rejected metaphysics, but also insisted that "the psycho-physical problem is a pseudo-problem" (p. 380). However, citing the behaviorist J. B. Watson with appreciation, Hempel offered a "logical analysis of psychology," according to which the experience of pain, a "mental event," was to be reduced to its physical concomitants such as weeping, or a "decayed tooth with exposed pulp" (p. 377). This move follows the footsteps of Watson (1913, p. 174), who defined thinking in terms of its bodily concomitants, such as the movements of vocal chords in subvocal speech. The explicit reason for such conceptualization was the nonobservability of thinking in Watson's case and the principle of verifiability in Carnap's case and not their proclaimed allegiance to the metaphysical

category of matter. Regardless of the methodological and epistemological or "logical" reasons cited, the net effect was to implicitly subscribe to a materialist worldview in the tradition of Democritus and Hobbes.

The logical positivists Carnap and Hempel prescribed the use of the language of physics as a means to unify science while conveniently ignoring the needs of various areas of study to develop different "languages" as appropriate for their areas of study. Similarly, the behaviorist Watson (1913) tried to integrate psychology into the natural sciences by adopting the methods (observation, experiment) and goals (prediction and control) of the natural sciences with utter disregard for other legitimate goals for psychological knowledge (emancipation, edification, etc.). The history of philosophy and psychology has shown that the imposition of a particular language or of specific methods and goals does not help the unification of science, nor does it lead to a univocalist psychology. Staats's lamentation over psychology's crisis of disunity suggests that he implicitly recognizes the complete failure of the positivist program. Yet he expects to attain the positivist goal of unification through the same old positivist methods, rather than critically examining the positivist epistemology and considering pluralist alternatives. At any rate, psychologists are not united in following Staat's prescription; there is at least a minority of psychologists in North America who explicitly recognize the failure of a positivist approach and are seeking alternative epistemologies and goals (Tolman, 1992). Their search is guided by several recent trends of thought in the philosophy of science, which deserve to be discussed here.

The Sociology of Knowledge

Scheler (n.d./1970), whom I have referred to earlier in connection with his critique of Comte's Law of Three Stages of the development of knowledge, was one of the pioneers in the development of an intellectual movement in Germany that has come to be known as the *sociology of knowledge* Its main thesis is that the search for knowledge is essentially a social enterprise that is often limited or otherwise shaped by various aspects of the particular social setting in which it occurs. Scheler, who was aware of the intellectual history of India, noted for instance that Comte's "Law" was limited by what Comte knew about the history of European thought; had he known about India, he most probably would have drawn different conclusions. Mannheim (1929/1936), who is considered the father of the sociology of knowledge, pointed out how the worldview or "ideology" shared by knowledge seekers in any field unwittingly influences the outcome of their inquiry. What is believed to be true by everyone in the society is most often taken for granted without questioning. Such "truths" rarely appear problematic unless unusual events or visiting outsiders point out their dubious character — like the little boy who notices that the king has no clothes on. To help recognize the nature of influence of shared beliefs and values in a community of specialists in a

field of studies, Mannheim prescribed a practical strategy. He suggested that some scholar(s) in the field could move out of their familiar milieu to a different society, learn and adopt an alien worldview, and look back on the original worldview from the newly acquired perspective — like a villager moving back to his home after living in a city for some time. Such a maneuver would point out the blind spots in the former worldview that were not recognized before. Immigrants often stumble over cross-cultural insights if and when they reflect on their native culture or speak to a childhood friend or an old relative.

In the case of the present study, my experience as an immigrant has facilitated a Mannheimian exercise in perspective taking. Occasional visits to the country of origin offer concrete opportunities for carefully listening to relatively un-Westernized natives, for trying to identify the "authentic" indigenous viewpoints in the classical and folk traditions, and for seeking to recognize the unwitting changes in one's own views held prior to migration. To this end, I have repeatedly arranged discussions on specific issues with scholars trained in classical sources in Sanskrit and Pali in the authentic, un-Westernized Indian intellectual tradition. Like an urbanized village boy who goes back and forth between two different perspectives, it is possible for an immigrant to alternate between two worldviews and to critically examine the concepts of one in light of the other. Moreover, I have mentally switched between Eastern and Western perspectives again and again by trying to immerse myself alternately in traditional Sanskrit and Western texts dealing with overlapping or similar issues and by reading Indian and Western news magazines that present differing perspectives on common international news items. Such maneuvers provide plenty of opportunities to conduct the Mannheimian exercise of switching between perspectives of the old village and the new city.

Since the pioneering days of Mannheim to the present day, the sociology of knowledge has grown into a major area of study. In the mid-1970s, Buss (1975) observed that there was an emerging field of the sociology of psychological knowledge and offered a review of the literature published by that time. The social influence on knowledge in any field may be understood in terms of two main sources among others: first, institutions such as universities, granting agencies, and monasteries that support the sustained search for knowledge in particular areas and directions, and second, assumptions and values of dominant themes of culture that provide powerful ideational context shaping theoretical models. That policies of granting agencies shape our research by selective funding is a commonly known fact of our times. Today's psychological research is also shaped by the needs and demands of students and teachers in universities where much of the research is done. For the purpose of the present study, it is important to note that the contemplative search for the inner reaches of selfhood was supported over centuries in India by a variety of social customs and institutions such as *asramas* which were probably akin to the medieval monasteries of Europe. The insights of St.

Augustine and of Sankara who lived monastic lives, are quite likely to be different from those of modem academics who work in remarkably different settings. While we can appreciate and understand the differences arising from differing socio-cultural contexts, we need not assume that they must be necessarily irrelevant to each other. The psychologist John Crook has tried to show how the insights of medieval Tibetan Buddhist monks are relevant to the modem analytical philosophy of A. J. Ayer, and even to ordinary folk in the busy streets of London in the late 20th century (see Crook & Rabgyas, 1988). In the current era of globalization, the Dalai Lama can engage in a meaningful conversation with postmodern psychologists of the Western world. Such cross-cultural dialogues offer unique opportunities for overcoming the limits on self-understanding often imposed by socio-cultural context of inquiry, and thereby moving toward a more comprehensive understanding of the self.

Let me now turn to the themes of culture that, in my opinion, deeply affect the search for psychological knowledge. In an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1984), I had identified the following as issues in psychology where, in my opinion, the influence of cultural context is often deep and pervasive:

1. The assumption about the lawfulness of nature.
2. Assumptions or ontological doctrines borrowed from philosophy.
3. Attitudes about the relationship of human beings with nature.
4. Assumptions about human nature.
5. Assumptions about the human condition.
6. Values concerning the desirable human condition.

It is not necessary to repeat the discussion of these issues. The relevance of ontological categories like mind and matter for contemporary psychology has been noted above, and we shall return to this issue later on as appropriate to topics such as emotion and human agency. The various themes just listed will be discussed throughout the volume wherever they are appropriate.

The sociology of knowledge primarily examines knowledge in a given field in the sociocultural context of inquiry. Seen from such a contextualist viewpoint, knowledge appears to be always *relative* and not absolute. The relativistic implications of the sociology of knowledge militate against the absolutist notions that have prevailed ever since the natural sciences began to dominate the Western world-view. Mannheim, one of the founders of the sociology of knowledge, was acutely aware of the charge of relativism against his position, and discussed it extensively in his pioneering work, *Ideology and Utopia.* Over the past several decades, the sociology of knowledge has been heavily criticized for its relativism by many, Sir Karl Popper (1945/1967) being one of the most prominent among them.[15] The issue of relativism has recently emerged at the center stage with the advent of post-modernism.[16] Although it is not necessary to discuss this issue in all its ramifications, it is necessary to speak to several aspects of the controversy over absolutism

and relativism that are relevant to the discussion of selfhood in a cross-cultural context.

The "Requirement of Absoluteness" and the Decontextualization of the Search for Knowledge

Charles Taylor (1980) has traced the origins of absolutism in natural science to the "requirement of absoluteness" that developed as a guideline for the study of nature in Europe's Age of Enlightenment. He describes this requirement in the following way: "the task of science is to give an account of the world as it is independently of the meanings it might have for human subjects, or for how it figures in their experience" (p. 31). Let me illustrate this by borrowing a typical example often used in recent literature: From the point of view of a scientist, a piece of chalk is a brittle object of a particular size and shape, which is to be understood in terms of its physical properties and chemical composition. The fact that the same object is experienced differently by different persons — by a teacher as something to write with on the board, and by a mischievous student as a ballistic missile, for instance — is irrelevant from the scientific viewpoint. Indeed, the success of science lies greatly in expunging from ordinary processes of knowing the "desirability terms" that we normally attribute to objects in our world — as useful or useless, or as good, bad or indifferent, and so on.

In the early stages of the development of science in general, and of the empiricist epistemology in particular, a sharp distinction was often made between what is given in experience and what is *added* by the mind. The idea was to focus on only what is given and to meticulously purge everything that is added. While such sanitization of perception is useful, even necessary, in understanding objects qua objects, it becomes an impediment in understanding persons. For, as it should be quite clear, persons are not objects by definition. As Taylor (1980, p. 32) puts it, to understand a person is "to understand his *[sic]* emotions, his aspirations, what he finds admirable and compatible, what he loathes, what he yearns for, and so on." To put it in other words, it is natural for human beings to *interpret* the nature of the world around them. To understand human beings is to understand their interpretations, which is exactly what the scientific methods tries to avoid, or at least to keep to a minimum. This is why Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) made a clear distinction between the sciences of man, or *Geisteswissenschaften,* which must be essentially interpretive in their approach and focus on "understanding" (Verstehen, in German), and *Nuturwissenschaften,* which must follow the "requirement of absoluteness'' Dilthey, 1976).

It is these kinds of divisions of knowledge, among others, that the logical positivists were trying to obliterate in their project for unified science. One of the ways in which they tried to accomplish this was to *decontextualize* the process of knowing from its social as well as personal and psychological setting. Carnap

(1938/1949), for instance, insisted that "[i]t is possible to abstract in an analysis of the statements of science from the persons asserting the statements and from the psychological and sociological conditions of such assertions" (p. 408). It may not only be possible but also necessary at times to separate statements from their context so as to focus on their logic; indeed, decontextualization is a means to fulfill the requirement of *absoluteness* as opposed to *relativity*. But statements are often inextricably embedded in a web of interconnections so as to make sense of a person, situation, or society as a whole, and it is essential to understand them in terms of whole worldview within which they make sense. In general, absoluteness is attained through focusing on some specific part of what there is to understand, preferably on the smallest possible element. For example, the logical positivists preferred to focus on a single proposition, or a "logical atom," at a time, while the behaviorists prefer to focus on a single "variable" at a time. By sharp contrast, the sociologist of knowledge adopts a holistic viewpoint, as in Mannheim's example of comparing rural versus urban perspectives on common issues in life. In the present work, we are attempting to examine the issues of self and identity in the context of persons for whom they may be relevant, in terms of the psychological processes and concerns where they originate, and in the historical and cultural contexts in which they arise, grow, and change.

The Mirror Metaphor and the Foundationist View of Knowledge

In the history of Europe, two distinctive views of the nature, origin, and development of knowledge emerged: British empiricism and Continental rationalism. They often competed and sometimes collaborated, together shaping the modernist phase of the development of Western thought. In empiricism, knowledge was viewed as arising from and validated through *experience;* in rationalism, both origin and validation were ascribed to *reason.* While in empiricism knowledge has generally been viewed as a copy of reality, in rationalism it is often viewed as a construction. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Richard Rorty (1979) has argued that implicit in the empiricist epistemology is the metaphor of the mind as a mirror, or the "glassy essence" of humans, in which the world is reflected. Francis Bacon, the founder of British empiricism, explicitly used the mirror metaphor. In *Novum Organum* (Book I, aphorism XLI), Bacon said: "[T]he human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolors the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it" (1620/1905, p. 264). He then went on to describe various "idols" of the mind, i.e. errors and presuppositions, such as "dogmas of philosophies" and their "wrong laws of demonstration" that becloud the mirror and distort the images. The Baconian program of science involved an attempt to cleanse the mirror by ridding it of all 'the accumulated dirt, such as dogmas of the past, so that an accurate image of reality can be obtained on its spotless surface.

Following Bacon, John Locke (1690/1959) thought of the mind as a blank

slate, or more precisely as an "empty cabinet" (Vol. 1, p. 48),[17] in which knowledge arises by way of "simple ideas" such as green, blue, rough, smooth, and the like that reflect the properties of objects in the world. Simple ideas that are "given in experience" are the basic building blocks or "materials" from which the entire superstructure of knowledge is built. Those ideas that are presented in experience close together and repeatedly become connected in the mind so as to develop complex ideas. For example, such simple ideas as pink, soft, and moist may combine to produce the complex idea of a rose, and so on. Developing empiricism on the basis of this lead, David Hume (17394978) pointed out that "[w]hen any phaenomena are constantly and invariably conjoin'd together they acquire such a connexion in *imagination*" (p. 403, emphasis added). In other words, when the mind is repeatedly exposed to events like the motion of a billiard ball following from an impact of another ball, it forms a habit of expecting that objects *must* move whenever hit by another object. This is how the notion of cause originates. Hume very perceptively observed that such ideas as "cause" or "necessity" (i.e., that relevant effects must necessarily follow causes) are not given in experience; they are added by the mind. Since there is nothing given in experience that would guarantee that objects must always and necessarily move whenever hit, Hume became skeptical about notions like cause. This logical outcome of the empiricist viewpoint struck at the very base of the newly developing Newtonian science, since it depended heavily on empirical evidence and the idea of causality. It is due to this blow against Newtonian science that Kant was "awakened from his slumber" and set out to rescue it from the eclipse of Humean skepticism.

While Kant agreed with Hume that knowledge originates in experience, he could not agree with Hume in viewing experience as the *only* source for validation of knowledge. He shifted his focus from Lockean simple ideas or "intuitions" originating in perceptual experience as the only constituents of knowledge and added concepts and propositions as equally important ingredients. He proposed that basic concepts like cause and effect, necessity versus contingency, unity and plurality, and so on are not added by the mind; the mind is equipped with them from the start. Concepts such as cause and effect, or one and many are "categories of the understanding." They exist *a priori,* i.e., prior to experience, as "standard equipment" of human minds, so to speak. It is the prior possession of the categories of the understanding that make it possible to have a meaningful experience. If the mind were merely a blank and inert mirror that accurately reflects the objects placed in front of it, it would not make sense of the surrounding world any more than a camera that knows no difference between the pictures of a donkey and a celebrity. The Kantian categories of the understanding help us to *organize* the information provided by the senses so that it makes sense. The mind must actively construct meanings out of raw experience with the help of rational categories or concepts, for, as Kant put it, "intuitions without concepts are blind." [18]

As noted by Rorty (1979, Ch. 3), Kant's contribution advanced as it deepened

the mirror metaphor, for it implied that concepts and propositions were *representations* of the world even as the Lockean simple and complex ideas were. From this viewpoint the entire field of knowledge is seen as an assemblage of accurate representations. There are two major components here: ideas that directly reflect objects plus connections among such ideas (Hume), or truths of fact and truths of reason (Leibniz), or synthetic and analytic truths (Kant). When Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) invented modem logic, he was suggesting laws of connecting ideas or symbols that were ostensibly *isomorphic* with the actual connections among entities existing in the real world, and the stage was set for deepening the mirror metaphor.[19] In Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1921/1974, pp. 8 *ff),* I find a good expression of the mirror metaphor that Rorty has analyzed. Wittgenstein speaks of a "picture" as a "model of reality" that "represents a possible situation in logical space" and is constituted by "elements" that are connected with one another "in a determinate way."

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature,* Richard Rorty (1979) has shown how, over the years, the metaphor of a *foundation* for knowledge has tagged along after the mirror metaphor. While the mirror metaphor follows from the idea of knowledge as accurate representation, the metaphor of foundation implies that knowledge in any field of studies is, or should be, a superstructure that rests on two unshakable pillars: first, a set of privileged descriptions whose accuracy cannot be doubted, and second, a set of privileged propositions or ideas whose justification is beyond impeachment. The first pillar supports the notion of knowledge as a matter of relationship between a statement and the object which it describes. If someone doubts my statement that this piece of flint is solid, all I need to do is ask that person to hold that piece between his hands and press them, which should stop all such doubting. This view of knowledge comes straight from the history of British empiricism. In his famous *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Locke said: "If one asks me, *What this solidity is,* I send him to his senses to inform him. Let him put a flint or a football between his hands, and then endeavor to join them, and he will know" (1690/1959, Vol. 1, p. 156, italics original). The direct experience of the object would be so compelling that it would be silly to doubt the accuracy of my description.

The second pillar supports the view of knowledge as a matter of relationship of one proposition with another; it belongs to the "logical space" where logic or reasoning provides meaningful connections between propositions or syllogisms. If someone challenges my argument, I would justify it by giving another, more plausible argument from which the first one follows. If you challenge the second, I might give a third one and so on. But this infinite regress from one statement to another and yet another would have to stop somewhere—preferably at a point where the statement is so self-evident that it would be meaningless to challenge it. An example from Kant's (1781/1966) *Critique of Pure Reason* would illustrate this. In support of the notion of the continued existence of the self-as-knower, he

pointed out that it is simply absurd to suggest that one who claims to know anything does not exist in the first place or to think that a knower who changes from one moment to another would ever get to know anything. In both the instances, where one doubts either the correctness of the description of an object, or the meaning and validity of what is said, one would ultimately arrive at "a situation in which argument would be not just silly but impossible, for anyone gripped by the object in the required way will be *unable* to do doubt or see an alternative. To reach that point is to reach the foundations of knowledge" (Rorty, 1979, p. 159, emphasis original).

Challenges to the Foundationist Views of Knowledge

The cornerstones of foundationism are atomism, reductionism, and the fundamental distinction between truths of fact versus truths of reason (or synthetic versus analytic truths). Both atomism and reductionism as well as the synthetic–analytic distinction have come under heavy attack over the past few decades. It is neither necessary nor possible to examine the increasingly blurry distinction between synthetic and analytic truths and the parallel distinction between facts "given in experience" and interpretations "added by the mind." Many of us would hesitate to put it as bluntly as Nietzsche, who said that there are no facts, only interpretations; but serious doubts have been raised about the fundamental assumption of empiricism that what is "given" in experience is "self-authenticating." Wilfrid Sellars (1963, p. 169), for instance, speaks of the "myth of the given." "For the given, in epistemological tradition," he says, "is what is *taken* by these self-authenticating episodes." Opposing the doctrine of the self-authentication of the "given" by its antonym "taken" is not a mere play on words. That the mind "actively seeks out" rather than "passively receives" information is a very old idea. The only difference between the old and new thinking on this matter is that now it is a respectable successor to the British empiricist tradition who is saying this. Thus, Sellars (1963, p. 1) makes a crucial distinction between "knowing *that*" versus "knowing *how,*" indicating the passive character of knowing or understanding that "water supports my body," as opposed to the active character of knowing "how to swim." Sellars pokes fun at the static character of the metaphor of the foundation, saying that it forces us to choose between two alternative images: "the picture of an elephant which rests on a tortoise (What supports the tortoise?) and the picture of a great Hegelian serpent of knowledge with its tail in its mouth (Where does it begin?)" (p. 170). Empirical or scientific knowledge, he suggests, "is rational, not because it has a *foundation* but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put *any* claim in jeopardy, though not *all* at once (emphasis original, p. 170).

Rorty (1979) rightly chooses W. V. O. Quine as the other major critic of the rational–empiricist view of knowledge. Quine's well-known essay titled "Two

Dogmas ofEmpiricism" (1953/1964) offers a devastating criticism ofempiricism, or rather, of the rational–empiricist epistemology of the logical positivists. He directs his attack on the atomist and reductionist idea that the validity of scientific knowledge is based on specific observations of what is given in experience and on particular (in Rorty's terms "foundational") statements in the form of "logical laws." According to Quine (1953A964, p. 42), "the unit ofempirical significance is the whole science." What matters is the total picture, whose authenticity does not depend on the accuracy of so-called foundational elements. He conveys the holistic character of knowledge with the following metaphor: "total science is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience" (p. 42). The holistic and dynamic nature of a field of force stands in sharp contrast with the static and inert character of, respectively, foundation and mirror metaphors. Insofar as the metaphor offoundation suggests its immovability (i.e., the apparent finality or unalterable character of the foundational statements underlying a theory), Quine has the following to say: "Any statement can be held true come what may, if we make drastic enough adjustments in the system.... Conversely, by the same token, no statement is immune to revision" (p. 43).

Both Sellars and Quine thus envision science as an open field in which statements are forever revisable, not as a fixed set of statements that rest on some immovable foundation. This view resembles the Popperian vision of science as a discourse where one can make unbridled conjectures that are forever and completely open to refutation. It also resembles the hermeneutic principle of the "hermeneutic circle" according to which it is the structured relations ofthe whole and not the elements themselves that convey meaning—like the words in a sentence or characters and events in a play. Also, the "forever revisable" nature of statements in science may be likened to the hermeneutic principle that all interpretations are forever open to reinterpretation. In Rorty's words, "a necessary truth is just a statement such that nobody has given us any interesting alternative which would lead us to question it" (1979, p. 175). Interestingly, this view closely parallels the Advaita Vedāntic view that knowing implies having a not-yet-falsified cognitive state that is shaped in the image of an object.[20]

Knowledge as Justified Belief

According to Rorty, there is more to knowledge than accurate representation, a view central to the epistemology based on the mirror metaphor. The reflection of reality in our minds can be misleading, even as perceptual illusions like a stick dipped in water that appears bent in water, or the rope that appears like a snake, to take the favorite example ofthe Advaita Vedāntists. Even where the mental image corresponds closely with the object it represents, we need to ascertain with confidence the veridicality of our impressions. To put it in Rorty's words, "we

understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief, and thus have no need to view it as accuracy of presentation" (Rorty, 1979, p. 170).

The notion of the "justification of a thesis" goes back to Carnap's *Logical Structure of the World* (1928/1967, p. vii). The basic idea here is that only the *justifed* theses and propositions qualify as knowledge. The distinction that Hans Reichenbach (1938), a logical positivist, made between the "context of discovery" and the "context of justification" (p. 382) is crucial here.[21] The former implies the activities of science involved in the discovery of scientific ideas, including psychological processes of observing and thinking. The latter, the context of justification, includes all the factors involved in justifying the claim that may have been arrived at in the process of observing and thinking: testing or verification of the claim by empirical methods such as an experiment, ascertaining the relevance and coherence of the claim in light of other relatable claims, and so on. The numerous emotional and irrational factors involved in the psychological processes of discovery are recognized, and these must be guarded against, or "filtered out." Justification is the process in which such filtering is accomplished. As Carnap (1928/1967) put it: "The *justification,* however, has to take place before the forum of the understanding; here we must not refer to our intuition or emotional needs" (p. xvii).

The point to note here is that the "forum of understanding" before which justification has to take place is not the individual but the community of scientists.22 As argued by Rorty (1979), "justification is not a matter of a special relation between ideas (or words) and objects, but of conversation, of social practice" (p. 170). It would argue that the moment the *social* nature of the process of justification is recognized, many of the principles of the sociology of knowledge come into the picture. Thomas Kuhn's view that the search for scientific knowledge occurs in *communities* of specialists who share a paradigm is relevant in this connection, and that is what we turn to at this point.

Psychology and Kuhnian Paradigms

Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) has helped us realize that, at its cutting edge, scientific inquiry occurs in highly specialized groups that share a *paradigm,* i.e., a disciplinary matrix or a framework of inquiry that defines appropriate problems to solve and provides exemplars or model solutions. The concept of the paradigm has been criticized for its multiple connotations; it is true that Kuhn uses it to mean a community of specialists, as well as their shared beliefs, values, and methodology - all at once (Masterman, 1970). Regardless of such ambiguity and its attendant problems, the composite nature of the paradigm nevertheless points out that scientific inquiry is in fact a social enterprise that requires not only a community of specialists, but also a shared cognitive

framework. In the "forum of understanding" before which a Carnap would want scientific claims justified, there must be both these elements present: a number of specialists *and* a cognitive framework that they share. Leaving aside the controversies over Kuhn's concept of paradigms and paradigm shifts through scientific revolutions (see Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970), let us see how these concepts apply to psychology in general and to self-understanding in particular.

According to Kuhn, the diversity of approaches to issues in contemporary psychology is indicative of its preparadigmatic, protoscientific character. In the future when psychology would mature as a scientific discipline, it will have acquired a single common paradigm, even as physics did at its stage of maturity attained through the revolutionary work of Isaak Newton (1642–1727). In other words, a univocalist approach should be psychology's legitimate goal. Whatever differences Kuhn may have with the logical positivists, he shares with them the view that physics is the queen of sciences, a standard against which all other sciences must be compared. This "physics-envy"[23] is bad for the healthy growth of psychology, for it must develop methods and standards appropriate to its own subject matter. Unlike physics, which excludes the scientist from its subject matter, psychology, which studies people, must include scientists - their behavior, values, and so forth — in its subject matter. The psychologist simply cannot observe, experiment with, or control people in the same way as the physicists study or control objects in nature. While atoms and forces do not try to protect their privacy, the subjects in the laboratories or the patients in clinics who psychologists study often try to hide their feelings, protect their privacy or other rights, and sometimes try to please or even cheat psychologists for their own reasons, good or bad. It is of course possible to study people as physical entities moving in space, which of course they are, but only in part. As noted previously, to understand people is to understand their viewpoints, hopes, and fears. If so, the psychologist who wants to understand people in this sense of understanding should be willing to hear what they say and be ready to interpret what they mean.

To put it in other words, Kuhn's suggestion that psychology should have a single paradigm like physics raises the same old issue as denying the place of psychology in the highly interpretive disciplines of the humanities and assigning it to the ostensibly noninterpretive natural sciences. Ironically, it is Kuhn's own work that recognizes the importance of interpretation in the natural sciences, for, after all, scientific revolutions are brought about mainly by offering a new interpretation of the same old sets of facts. Moreover, in *The Essential Tension,* published several years after his earlier work on scientific revolutions, Kuhn (1977) speaks of his "discovery of hermeneutics" (p. xiii). Once it is admitted that interpretation plays an important role in the pursuit of knowledge within as well as outside of the natural sciences, univocalism gets muted. Doors are then open for pluralism, since the same facts are admittedly open to new, alternative interpretations and perspectives even as they are during revolutionary periods. Indeed, in the

1970 postscript to the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Kuhn discusses the issue of relativism, which we will briefly examine later in this chapter.

As suggested earlier, an attempt to cast psychology in a monoparadigmatic mold, like physics, has problems primarily due to the essential differences between the subject matter of physics and psychology. When we turn to self-knowledge, the concept of paradigms becomes even more problematic. While in physics the scientist is the interpreter of inert matter, in psychology he or she is the interpreter of those who are also interpreters in their own right. In the study of the self, which is itself considered a "theory" (or an interpretation) of who one is, the self becomes both the object of study as well as the basic means with which to study it. The issue here is that of the difficulty in dividing the self into both the object studied and the subject studying it at the same time. Comte, the founder of positivism, had argued as early as 1882 that the method of introspection was impossible because "[t]he thinker cannot divide himself into two, of whom one reasons whilst the other observes him reason." William James quotes the above words in his discussion of the "methods and snares of psychology" in his *Principles* (1890/1983, p. 188). Eons earlier, the ancient Upanisadic thinker Yajnavalkya posed the same sort of a question: "Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All?" *(Bṛhadāranyaka* Upanisad, 2.4.14). This sort of question cannot be answered in the natural science context in which Kuhnian views developed, because the natural science perspective is essentially *extraspective.* The study of the self raises epistemological issues that are beyond the scope of contemporary philosophy of science, and this is the kind of area in which some of the Eastern traditions have much to offer.

The Rise of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, as a theory of the interpretation of meaning, originated from *exegesis,* meaning attempts at critical interpretation of scriptural texts such as the Bible. Although in the ancient times exegesis was focused on the scriptures, the principles of interpretation that developed in that context are now recognized as being commonly applicable to nonscriptural texts: legal, literary, historical, archival, personal documents, and so on. In more recent times, Martin Heidegger, and his student Hans Georg Gadamer, have been particularly influential in pointing out the relevance of hermeneutics in the entire area of the *Geisteswissenschuften,* or the human and social sciences.

Unlike the predominantly atomistic and reductionistic approaches common to the natural sciences, the hermeneutic approach is unmistakably holistic. As noted, one of the basic principles of hermeneutics, the "hermeneutic circle," suggests that meanings arise from mutual relationships between the parts and the whole. As in the standard example cited before, it is words in proper syntax, or characters and events in the story or play as a whole, that make sense *together,* not

when taken one by one. Another well-known principle of hermeneutics states that "there is no understanding without preunderstanding." What this means is that, to be able to make sense of anything —whether a new text, language, culture, acquaintance, or what have you — one needs to have *some* prior basis from which to proceed. In the case of a new language of which one knows not a single word, an identifiable sound heard repeatedly in conjunction with some common gesture or grimace might begin to make sense, perhaps as a word possibly meaning disapproval. Assuming that it means "no," the listener might relate it to another sound combined with a gesture pointing at the door, and might guess that what is being said means "don't go that way." Thus, the first step would involve some conjecture about an ostensibly universal meaning of the gesture from which the listener's process of understanding might begin. Each step would add to the spiraling process of increments in levels of preunderstanding and subsequent understanding. At each step there is a movement back and forth between preunderstanding and new information, between the new element added and the total pool of knowledge acquired that far. The holistic, relational, and dynamic aspects of understanding emphasized in the hermeneutic approach are often ignored in the conventional approach to learning commonly found in the experimental and behavioristically oriented tradition of Ebbinghaus (1850–1909) and Skinner.

According to Gadamer (1960/1975, pp. 269-270), to engage in conversation with a stranger in order to get to know her or him is to discover the stranger's standpoint and horizon. The concepts of *standpoint* and *horizon* are distinctly holistic concepts that imply overall perspective, stance, and other subtle aspects of mutual understanding and interpretation. If the two persons engaging in a conversation belong to different cultures, communities, or generations, the horizons of both parties are likely to start expanding. Getting to know members of another culture better enables us to see the world from a perspective not available within the horizons of our native culture. The implications of this explanation of some elementary concepts of hermeneutics for understanding psychological thought in an unfamiliar culture should be obvious.

The more recent work of Gadamer, Ricouer, Habermas, and other scholars has started a hermeneutic "movement" that is now spreading to various branches of the humanities from literary criticism through law and communication to psychology. Although classical psychoanalysis did not explicitly recognize the principles of hermeneutics, the implicitly hermeneutic nature of psychoanalysis has been recognized since at least as early as the 1950s. In *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition,* David Bakan (1958, p. 247) tried to show that Freud wished to suggest, consciously or unconsciously, that "the analysis of a person is like the analysis of Torah," Torah being the books of the Bible that describe the Law of Moses. This suggests the metaphor of the person as a *text,* which manifests in the form of the written reports of that person's dream, case history, autobiography, biography, and similar documents by or about that person. Bakan (1958, pp.

258 *ff)* notes that Freud's approach owes much to the interpretation of dreams suggested in the Talmud (Jewish texts concerning civil and canonical law), and more particularly the symbolic interpretation typical of the mystical tradition called the Kabbala. Even if Bakan's claims were disputable, the interpretive nature of psychoanalysis and its parallel with hermeneutics as originating from the exegetic tradition should be quite clear. From the mid-1960s onward, there has been a growing recognition of hermeneutic implications of psychoanalysis, which is illustrated by the writings of Herbert Spiegelberg (1965, Vol. 1, pp. 324–25) and Paul Ricoeur (1970), among others.

More recently, Carl Lesche (1985) has tried to show that psychoanalysis is neither a natural science nor simply a therapeutic technique, as it is made to appear; rather, it is a form of research in the humanities. More specifically, Lesche considers psychoanalysis to be an attempt at self-understanding and interpretation guided by the principles of dialectical hermeneutics. Its natural setting is the dialogue between the analysand and the analyst, and it begins with the patient's (analysand's) description of his or her situation, usually a puzzling action or vexing experience. The purpose is to emancipate the analysand from his or her agonies, and the analyst helps do this by offering hypotheses or quasi-explanations based on his or her preunderstandings. Despite being couched in natural science terms such as charge, energy, determinism, and so on, the task is not to manipulate the analysand as if he were an object to be controlled, but to elucidate the meaning underlying his dreams or problematic actions. It is as though the analysand and analyst are partners in research in the humanities, rather than counterplayers in a Machiavellian power play.

Once a text is accepted as a proper metaphor for understanding a person, certain other types of psychological research can be viewed as an enterprise in interpretive hermeneutics. Gordon W. Allport's use of letters or other personal documents in psychological research (Allport, 1942, 1965), and Erik Erikson's psychohistorical interpretations of a biography of Martin Luther (Erikson, 1958/1962) or the autobiography of Mahatama Gandhi (Erikson, 1969), may also be construed as exercises in hermeneutics. More recently, the relevance of hermeneutics for psychology has begun to be recognized in the United Kingdom (Gauld & Shotter, 1977), the United States (Packer, 1985; Gergen, Fisher, & Hepburn, 1986; Messer, Sass, & Woolfolk, 1988), and Europe (Terwee, 1990). With the end of the millennium approaching, there is a steady growth of literature based on hermeneutics in psychology; it is not necessary to provide its bibliography here.

The application of hermeneutic principles to the psychological study of human beings marks a fundamental change in the direction of psychology's growth away from its long-standing commitment to the perspective and methods of natural science. The rise of hermeneutics does not imply the end or repudiation of the natural science approach to their study; for, after all, human beings are organisms and their bodies function like machines, and to that extent insights of biology and

physics do apply. Human brains also function similarly to computers, and to that extent the relevance of artificial intelligence and cognitive science for psychology may not be ruled out. However, human beings are also social creatures, products and creators of culture, and meaning makers functioning within what Shotter (1993) calls *conversational realities.* In this context, Shotter's view of humans as rhetoricians and the metaphor of the self as an unfinished text (Gergen, 1988; Altar, 1990) make a good deal of sense. To the extent that human beings function like machines, it would be possible and even necessary to speak in the univocal language of physics. However, insofar as humans construct their lives through the use of language within the context of eternally revisable social customs, we must deal with changing worlds, multiple "realities," plurality of theories, and countless alternative interpretations.

Some of the implications of the hermeneutic approach to self-understanding will be discussed later in this volume in a separate chapter on the self-as-knower. It may simply be noted at this point that the hermeneutic approach is most compatible with the Vedantic approach. First, the system of Vedānta like hermeneutics, originated from scriptural exegesis. Indeed, another name for the system of Vedānta is *Uttara Mīmāṁsā* which literally means a theory that interprets the later *(uttara)* Vedic texts, i.e., the Upanisads. Second, as we shall see in our discussion of the self-as-knower, the Vedsntic approach to self-knowledge depends heavily (although not entirely) on the interpretive understanding of the true nature of the self with the help of the Upanisads and other Vedantic texts.

Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructionism

In recent years, several disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences have witnessed many somewhat separate but related trends of thought, which can be considered varieties of "constructionism." Prominent in this regard is the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) in sociology, Goodman (1978) and Arbib and Hesse (1986) in philosophy, and Gergen (1985), Harré (1986, 1987), and many others in psychology. A central feature of constructionism is its direct opposition to reductionism, as the very connotation of "construction" indicates. The roots of these trends of thought can be traced to earlier work of many scholars in several disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, as well as physics. In psychology, for instance, Piaget (1954) pioneered a constructivist view of cognition, as indicated by the title of one of his well-known books, the The *Construction of Reality in the Child.* Piaget's cognitive constructivism stands in sharp contrast to the highly reductionist view of cognition common in today's "cognitive science" approach (Stich, 1983). As I shall try to show later in this chapter, the work of George Kelly (1955) in personality theory and psychotherapy was based largely on cognitive constructivist terms. The Piagetian and Kellyian approaches suggest that human beings cognitively construct and continually reconstruct an image of the

world and of their position in it. Although this idea is implicit in the highly influential work of the sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1966), they emphasize social context more than intraindividual factors, while Piaget and Kelly emphasize developmental and intraindividual factors more than social. In recognition of this difference, the individualist and heavily cognitivist approach shared by Piaget and Kelly has come to be known as "cognitive constructivism," as distinguished from the "social constructionism" of Berger and Luckmann, Gergen, Harré and others.

Both the cognitive constructivist and social constructionist perspectives have profound implications for our understanding of the self. As we shall note in Chapter 4, the self-as-knower can be conceived of as that which constructs images of itself and of the surrounding world. As well, the so-called "social self"-or the social roles with which we identify ourselves -maybe thought of as a product of societal influences or a matter of the "social construction of reality." Various implications of such constructivist and constructionist views of the self will be discussed at length in Chapter 4. In addition to such implications for selfhood, constructionism raises certain ontological and epistemological issues that need to be discussed here, since they are relevant to several other issues to be discussed in the remainder of this volume.

The Cognitive Construction of Reality and of Knowledge

As noted, according to the constructionist perspective, human beings cognitively construct and continually reconstruct a view of the world around them and of their place within it. In this respect, the child and the adult, the "ordinary person" as well as the philosopher and the scientist, are all alike, albeit at different levels of sophistication in the task of construction. Piaget's (1954) pioneering studies show how infants begin relating to the world around them by means of their naturally endowed sensory and motor capacities such as looking, listening, grasping, and sucking, and gradually develop increasingly complex cognitive capacities. On the basis of simple but astute observations of children's behavior, Piaget shows how an infant looking for a missing toy must have preverbally developed the notion of object permanence and how babies who enjoy repeatedly toppling a stack of blocks implicitly conceive of the relationship between cause (moving hand) and effect (collapsing of the stack). Seen this way, the child is a budding philosopher concerned with the principle of causality and a scientist engaged in "experimentally" verifying the lawful relationships among replicable natural phenomena. Like Piaget, George Kelly (1955) assumes that such cognitive construction of reality is common to "ordinary" persons as well as scientists. Such construction serves the purpose of understanding, predicting, and controlling various kinds of phenomena that persons of varied educational background or age need to deal with in their respective worlds. But unlike Piaget's developmental focus, Kelly tries primarily to develop techniques, such as the Role Repertory

Test, for understanding ordinary persons' ways of predicting the behavior of significant others and of relevant events in life. Kelly uses these techniques to help patients recognize the instances where their predictions are not confirmed by facts and to revise their views appropriately for better understanding and control of events just as scientists do.

The similarity between the ordinary persons and scientists suggested by cognitive constructionists like Piaget and Kelly is not a psychologist's fancy trying to claim parity between psychology and physics. Indeed, there are physicists who insist that doing physics involves intellectually, i.e., cognitively, constructing a model of the physical world. The most well-known name among such physicists is Albert Einstein. In his letter to Herbert Samuel, Einstein (1951) expressed his constructionist views in the following words:

> In fact, however, the "real" is in no way immediately given to us. Given to us is merely the data of our consciousness . . . There is only one way from the data of consciousness to "reality," to wit, the way of conscious or unconscious intellectual construction, which proceeds completely free and arbitrarily. (p. 137)
>
> We are free to choose which elements we wish to apply in the construction of physical reality. (p. 141)
>
> Since the days of Faraday and Maxwell the conviction has established itself that "mass" has to be replaced by "field" as a basic element or brick for constructing "reality." ... I think it is not justified to regard mass as something "real," the field, however, as merely a "fancy." (p. 145)

Einstein's juxtaposition of the word "fancy" against "real," and his use of the expression "constructing 'reality' " are especially noteworthy here. They make it clear that here Einstein is dealing with issues concerning reality and ways of knowing it, i.e., ontological and epistemological issues that are, as per convention, special topics for philosophers rather than physicists. The philosopher Nelson Goodman (1978) also deals with the same issues from a constructionist viewpoint, and interestingly he too speaks of celestial physical motion, which was Einstein's special field of study. Goodman points out, for instance, that the "geocentric and heliocentric systems are different versions of 'the same facts' " (p. 93) constructed from different vantage points. Both Einstein and Goodman consider "facts" in the "real" world as primarily a matter of "intellectual construction," and both recognize that how we construct them depends on the context from which we see the world.

The historical roots of a constructionist view of motion may be traced to the work of the physicist–philosopher Ernst Mach, who was arguably the first thinker to clearly recognize that the understanding of physical motion depends to a great extent on the vantage point of the observer. A standard example is that, although it is the boat floating in the water underneath that seems to move while seeing from the top of the bridge, it is the bridge that seems to move while sitting in the boat. Both versions or motion are correct, depending on which vantage point one

chooses to speak from. The apparently different constructions from different contexts or vantage points need not necessarily be at odds with each other; both (or several) versions might be translatable into one another and equally correct within their respective frameworks. It is this *relativistic* view of physical motion in Mach's work that provided the crucial insights for Einstein's theory of relativity. What is relevant for us in the present context is not the problems in studying motion, space, or time, but some of the epistemological implications of Mach's work. Here are some of Mach's words that are relevant in this context:

> Different ideas can express the facts with the same exactness in the domain accessible to observation. The facts must hence be carefully distinguished from the intellectual constructs the formation of which they suggested. The latter - concepts - must be consistent with observation, and must in addition be logically in accord with one another. Now these two requirements can be fulfilled in more than one manner, and hence the different systems of geometry. (Mach, 1901-1903/1960, pp. 132–133,emphasis original)

Mach clarifies that although we can construct many different versions of what a given set of observations means, not all of them would be correct. To be worthy of being called knowledge, a construction or "theory" must fulfill standard criteria such as internal consistency and correspondence with data. The corpuscular and wave theories of light are good examples that illustrate how the same set of observations can be accounted equally well by two different theories. Physicists are free to use either the concept of *corpuscle* (particle) or that of wave as a basic element or "brick" for constructing reality, as Einstein would put it. The basic Machian thesis here is that it is possible to cognitively construct several equally viable theories of the same set of phenomena. The psychologist George Kelly (1955) has christened this thesis the "principle of *constructive alternativism"* (p. 15). It states that "there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world" (Kelly, 1955, p. 15). This principle clearly militates against absolutist or univocalist views of knowledge.

In more recent times, Thomas Kuhn seemed to promote univocalism to the extent that he placed physics above psychology, insofar as the former has developed a single, common "paradigm "—perhaps with the exception of corpuscular and wave theories -while the latter has a plethora of too many competing theories. Nevertheless, Kuhn recognizes that in most fields of science it is common for alternative theories to arise and to claim superiority over their rivals. Such competing theories stake a claim on the same territory marked by the same observations or experimental data. In such cases, according to Kuhn's oft-quoted words: "Debates over theory-choice cannot be cast in a form that fully resembles logical or mathematical proof.,,, There is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure which, properly applied, must lead each individual in the group to the same decision" (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 199–200).Kuhn's critics have construed his remarks about the lack of a "neutral algorithm for theory choice" to be suggestive of relativism. This charge is commonly leveled not

only against cognitive constructivism, but also against social constructionism. We shall return to the problem of relativism after a brief discussion of social constructionism.

The Social Construction of Reality

The credit for popularizing the idea of the "social construction of reality" goes to Berger and Luckmann's book of the same title. Building on the Mannheimian principles of the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1929/1936) and on the work of the sociologist–philosopher Alfred Schutz (1967), the psychologist Piaget (1954), and many others, Berger and Luckmann (1966) developed the thesis that the sphere in which people live their daily lives is a socially constructed reality. According to the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz (1945/1968, 1970), each human being lives in his or her "world," meaning the totality of a specific sphere of experience as seen and understood by him or her at a particular time and under specific circumstances. Used in this sense, the words *world* and *reality* mean much more than the earth moving in the solar system in which humans live as organisms in specific geographic locales and ecological surroundings. The "world" in the Shutzian sense may be individually perceived and subjectively defined as in the case of the world fabricated by a person in his or her daydreams. This is the subjective reality to which the individual reacts. Each individual also lives in a collectively shared and consensually defined world, like the world shared by lovers, by followers of a religious cult, or by a community of scientists. In a contemporary urban society there are many relatively different worlds existing side by side: worlds of politics, academics, chess players, amateur photographers, as well as a world of commerce, another of seafarers, and so on. Any given individual may live simultaneously, successively, alternatively, or occasionally in an undetermined number of such worlds. Many of these worlds are "man-made" and purely optional, such that one could drop in or drop out of them at will, for instance, as in the case of the world of philatelists that I sometimes participate in. Regardless of their negotiable, revisable, and even "artificial" nature, such cognitively and socially constructed worlds are "real" to the persons who participate in them. The existence of such worlds is rarely doubted by their residents, and their rules govern the members' plans, conduct, and .emotions in daily life.

In addition to such *social* worlds that we create, we also create wider *symbolic* worlds. The domain of myths, angels, gods, heaven, and hell is an example of a symbolic world that a religious community shares. In *The Sacred Canopy,* Peter L. Berger (1966b) describes his theory of the symbolic worlds. The symbolic world of the Tibetan Buddhists may be entirely different from that of the Mennonites in the American prairies, or from that of the Sunni Muslims in Afghanistan. But for each community, its own symbolic world is as "real" as the fields in which they grow food and the markets in which they shop. Scientists, too, live in symbolic worlds

defined by the Kuhnian paradigms of their speciality. However, the shared worldview of science is secular and value free; and *qua* scientists or academics of various stripes, we are generally expected to keep our values and spiritual needs out of the business of research and teaching. Given the unwritten doctrine of the separation of the science on the one hand and religion and spirituality on the other, an undetermined number of academics fulfill their religious and spiritual needs either at home alone or in their respective churches. By and large, the symbolic world of the academe is kept insulated from the symbolic worlds of the various religions and sects. But sometimes these symbolic worlds clash, as is illustrated in occasional debates on creationism versus evolutionism on North American campuses.

In the present work we will have to deal with several themes in the symbolic worlds of various sects of Hinduism and Buddhism, since it is within their contexts that some of the most significant indigenous psychological concepts and methods developed in India. Certain features of these symbolic worlds could conceivably interfere with the understanding of indigenous Indian concepts to the extent that they are inconsistent with or opposed to relevant aspects of the worldview of natural science in general and that of other religions in particular. At any rate, there is a definite connection between the self-understanding of a person and the socially constructed worlds — secular and religious, mundane and spiritual — in which he or she participates. In his essay, "Identity as a Problem in the Sociology of Knowledge," Peter Berger (1966a) suggests that the identity of a person may be defined as the "location" of a person in a given "world," and that one's selfhood may be construed in terms of a set of statuses and positions one occupies in the multiple worlds in which one participates. We shall discuss the implications of the social construction of reality for self and social identity in Chapter 4.

Constructivism, Realism, and Idealism

Constructivism and constructive alternativism are often thought of as necessarily implying either idealism or relativism or both. Both of these issues deserve to be considered here; let us take idealism first. The terms *real* and *ideal* have different meanings in various ontological doctrines, and the corresponding "isms" have continued to generate strong passions for and against each. We need only consider those aspects of this issue that pertain to cognitive constructivism and social constructionism. In this context, realism implies the belief in a mind-independent world, and idealism its opposite. Against this background, the notion of a "constructed" reality often conveys the constructivists' and constructionists' disbelief in a mind-independent world. Although this might be true of some constructionists, many of the prominent constructionists of our times explicitly express their belief in a mind-independent world. For instance, Michael Arbib and Mary Hesse (1986), who have emerged as prominent advocates of constructionism in contemporary philosophy of science, declare that "we do not take it to

imply a radically nonrealist view of science" (p. 7). Jean Piaget and George Kelly, two of the most prominent constructionists in psychology, are both realists. Kelly (1955, Vol. 1) clearly states that "[w]e presume that the universe is really existing and that man *[sic]* is gradually coming to understand it" (p. 6). Kelly is opposed to the "traditional realism," which insists that a man is "always the victim of circumstances." According to Kelly, not only is the universe real, it may also be possible to describe it accurately and as a whole by means of a single unified scheme of science. However, no such single grand scheme has yet been invented. One could say that contemporary science has implicitly adopted the strategy of dividing the universe into an increasing number of "parts" or aspects and continues generating ostensibly improved models of their chosen subject matter. Such model building may or may not eventually lead to a single body of unified science, as Carnap had hoped.

Be that as it may, to me it seems fair to say that people continue to cognitively construct models of the world, and that one is always free to construe the same object in more than one way. The processes of construction continue both within the "heads" of individuals and in conversations among individuals, and it does not matter whether the constructors believe in realism or idealism. Indeed, it does not matter whether they are even aware of the distinction between realism and idealism. It should not be surprising therefore if we find constructivists of a single school of thought divided into two branches, such that while one branch adopts a purely idealist position, the other does not. Such a situation is indeed obtained in the case of two branches of the Advaita Vedanta school, which, as I shall point out in Chapter 4, follows a constructivist epistemology. According to one of the branches of this school, which follows the *Dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi* viewpoint of Prakāśātman (ca. 1200 CE), the world is considered to be a simple illusion; things are believed to exist only when they are perceived but dissolve when they are not. All the other branches of the Advaita Vedanta school, however, reject such a purely idealist view and accept the mind-independent existence of objects within the practical reality of daily living (see Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, pp. 478–479). In fact, most Advaita Vedantists other than those of the *Dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi* branch are keen to repudiate the idealist doctrines of the Vijñānavāda Buddhism.

To my knowledge, none of the contemporary cognitive constructivists, such as the Piagetians and Kellyians, adopt an idealist position, but I have met at least one social constructionist who strongly rejected Piagetian and Kellyian cognitivism, since he thought its emphasis on intraindividual cognitive processes was bound to lapse into solipsism. The social constructionists, he suggested, avoid such a danger by insisting that the cognitive processes originate from interpersonal communication, and thereby keep away from the solitary abyss of an individualist viewpoint. Although the social constructionist might thus avoid the charge of idealism, many of them from Mannheim through Berger and Luckmann to Gergen have often faced the charge of relativism, which deserves to be examined.

ABSOLUTISM, RELATIVISM, AND PLURALISM

Absolutist views of knowledge were nurtured in the Western world in its so-called "modern era" by a loose alliance of several epistemic principles: the empiricist view of knowledge as a copy of the real world, the rationalist views of the universal principles of the understanding, the logical positivist assumption of the viability of an ideal language of symbolic logic, and the foundationist conceptions of knowledge. All these principles have recently come under serious attack. Interestingly, the most serious attacks on foundationism have arisen from insiders of its very bastion: from within the camp of analytical philosophers such as Quine and Sellars, whom Rorty (1979) has called the "heretical followers of [Bertrand] Russell" (p. 167). There are of course others outside of the analytical camp who have also undermined the absolutist epistemology of logical positivism. The psychologist Jean Piaget, for instance, has repeatedly argued that Kurt Godel has conclusively shown that any formalized axiomatic system must always remain incomplete, and that absolutist epistemologies based on a putatively ideal logico-mathematical language are doomed to failure. Says Piaget (1968/1970c): "[T]he pyramid of knowledge no longer rests on foundations but hangs by its vertex, an ideal point never reached, and, more curious, constantly rising" (p. 34). I shall have more to say about Piaget when I discuss the self-as-knower (Chapter 4).

In the current, "postpositivist" era of psychology, constructionism and hermeneutics are emerging as two major contenders for metatheory for psychology. With this, the pendulum is swinging away from absolutism to unrestrained relativism. In *Against Method,* Paul Feyerabend (1976) has advocated nothing short of an epistemic anarchy. It is my impression that critics of foundationism such as Rorty (1979), as well as some protagonists of constructionism such as Gergen (1982), tend to suggest no limits to relativism, and often invoke among their listeners a strong emotional response as if they are being rudely awakened from a positivist slumber and are suddenly thrown into a Feyerabendian anarchy. But there seems to be no reason to put the absolutism–relativism issue in an either/or fashion, and as I have suggested elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1993), there seems to be no need to be overly concerned about the dangers of limitless relativism.

As far as psychology is considered, two of the prominent constructivists, Piaget and Kelly, oppose absolutism without advocating an unrestrained relativism, and their positions are worth considering briefly here. Piaget (1968/1970~) views knowledge as continually progressing from "weaker" to "stronger" cognitive structures. His model of cognitive development points out several specific criteria of the more advanced cognitive structures - higher levels of differentiation, integration, equilibration, and so on -although to my knowledge he has not equally well clarified what characterizes progress to "stronger" systems of knowledge as such. As noted, Kelly's principle of *constructive alternativism* suggests that there are always alternative constructions of anything we may wish to study,

but he also insists that "some of them are undoubtedly better than others. They are better from our human point of view because they support more precise and more accurate predictions about more events" (Kelly, 1955, pp. 14–15). He specifically refers to the "importance of coherence, relevance, comprehensiveness, parsimony, verifiability, rigor, and predictive efficiency in theory construction" (Kelly, 1969, p. 294).

I have come across echoes of these Kellyian thoughts in the philosophy of science literature. After being criticized for presenting a relativist view of science in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* Thomas Kuhn came up with a similar list of criteria to help evaluate competing theories. In *The Essential Tension,* Kuhn (1977) says: "These five characteristics — accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity, and fruitfulness -are all standard criteria for evaluating the adequacy of a theory" (p. 322). These are old-fashioned criteria, but the only difference is that Kuhn, like Kelly and Piaget, considers theories in any field to be open to construction, rejects absolutism typical of logical positivism, and as noted, insists that "there is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 200). I take the list of acceptable criteria for theory choice to mean first, that there is limit to relativism -not just anything will go since there are limited number of criteria for choice- and second, that their application requires discretion.

Absolutism versus relativism is one of the actively debated issues in contemporary philosophy of science (e.g., Barnes & Bloor, 1982; Hollis & Lukes, 1982; Geertz, 1984; Bernstein, 1988; Krausz, 1989; Rorty, 1991). It is not necessary to examine the issue here in great detail. Within the field of studies of person, self, and identity to be discussed in this volume, there exists a wide array of different perspectives, and it is necessary for me to indicate how I would deal with this diversity. As indicated earlier, I think that absolutist and univocal positions are neither desirable nor viable, for their adoption opens the gates for ignoring or even trying to suppress alternatives. Although the number of alternative perspectives is large, they are not so large that the situation becomes chaotic. Plus, as indicated, one must use discretion as appropriate to the issues being studied and the goals of the study.

One of the basic points I wish to make in the following chapter is that persons are not things that can be studied as objects completely governed by universal and eternal laws statable in absolutist and univocalist terms. The goal of "prediction and control," highly valued during the heyday of behaviorism, implied the objectification of persons by psychologists who assigned themselves the right to control others. This goal as well as the methods appropriate within its contexts are in many ways inappropriate for the study of persons, selves, and their identity. If human beings are understood to be meaning makers capable of pursuing distinct, self-defined goals, then we need approaches that are appropriate to this understanding of humans. Habermas's (1968/1971) emphasis on knowledge as serving multiple human interests, including "emancipation," makes sense in this context.

Such a perspective has been very much a minority perspective in Western psychology so far. An important point in taking a cross-cultural look is to recognize the radically different conceptions of knowledge across cultures. I hope to be able to show that traditional Indian systems such as Yoga and Vedanta approach issues pertaining to personhood, selfhood, and identity in ways significantly different from those common in the West. They also conceive of self-transformation in light of goals and values not stressed in the West. The diversity of goals such as self-actualization, positive mental health, self-realization, and the like demand and justify many alternative ways to seek and apply psychological knowledge. Moreover, in light of the principle of constructive alternativism discussed earlier, it is possible to construe the same object in more than one way, many or all of which may equally satisfy common criteria such as validity, accuracy, coherence, efficacy, and the like. Finally, pluralism has been the spirit of the Indian perspective for ages. The ancient Vedas suggest: Truth is one, but wise persons describe it differently *[ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti* (*Ṛg Veda*, 1, 164, 46)].

NOTES

1. There are numerous texts—just over 100—that often have been included under the category "Upanisad." About a dozen or so of these have been considered "principal," owing to their penetrating analysis of important issues. These more important Upanisads are among the oldest. They are believed to have been composed around 1500–600BC For an English translation of the principal Upanisads, see R. E. Hume (1931). For the present purpose I have relied on the Sanskrit text edited by V. P. Limaye and R. D. Vadekar (1958).
2. I have borrowed this metaphor from Gregory Bateson (1979, pp. 69–70). I am grateful to Ross Powell for bringing it to my attention.
3. In a footnote to her article, Abu-Lughod (1991, p. 161) ascribes the origin of the term "halfie" to a personal communication from the anthropologist Kirin Narayan, who has explained her views on this matter in a later publication (Narayan, 1993).
4. This view of perpetual *progress* stands in sharp contrast with the age-old Indian view of history, where civilization moves from its original pristine state or the Age of Truth (satya yuga) to successive stages of *deterioration* before being restored to a golden age. Also, in sharp contrast to the *linear* view of time common in the West, a *cyclical* view of time has prevailed in India, such that creation was believed to be followed by phases of evolution and dissolution, only to start a the process or creation again and to continue in cycles. For an account of the traditional Indian view of time, see M. Deshpande (1979).
5. For a discussion of the implications for psychology of the history of conflict between science and the Church since the 17th century, see Paranjpe (1984, pp. 17–32).
6. See Plato's *Republic* (1941), Chapter XIII.
7. The connection between Plotinus's ideas and Indian thought has been the topic of a conference. For papers submitted at this conference, see Harris (1982).
8. The idea of progress appears now to have spread well beyond Europe and is often reflected in the way in which ordinary people expect a pay raise and better and more of everything in life, year after year. It is being increasingly realized in recent years, however, that given the vast exploitation and rapid depletion of natural resources, expectations about perpetual progress are not only unsustain-

able, but are also most probably leading humankind to an irreversible ecological ruin. But during the 19th century, when Europeans had discovered vast and relatively empty continents open to colonizing, perpetual progress could not have been perceived as unaffordable.

9. The Hindu triad of gods involves Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa respectively, symbolizing the forces of creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe. Their consorts are, respectively, Sarasvati, Lakṣmī, and Pārvatī
10. In *Central Philosophy of Buddhism,* T. R. V. Murti (1960, p. 117, footnote) names Bhaskara among non-Advaita Vedātins who accused Sankara as being a Buddhist in disguise.
11. The words quoted here are an English paraphrase by Halbfass (1981/1988, p. 189) of the following original words in Sanskrit: *"kaiścid eva mlecchādibhir manusyāpasadaiḥ paśuprāyaiḥ."* Halbfass's source is page 86 of an edition of *Saṅkhya-tattva-kaumudi* i.e., Vacaspatimisra's commentary on Sānkhya Kārikā 5, edited by S. A. Srinivasan and published in Hamburg in 1967. The Monier-Williams dictionary translates the term apasad as the offspring of marriages of upper-caste men with lower-caste women, and as outcaste. The Webster's dictionary defines "scum" as refuse, or lowest class. There is no reason to quibble over the translation; the contempt for foreigners expressed by a noted scholar like Vacaspatimisra is obvious.
12. Professor Bhattacharyya's (1954) lecture was delivered in October 1931, at Chandernagore. Its text was recovered from his unpublished writings and published in the Visvabharati Quarterly.
13. In his article on logical positivism in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* John Passmore (1967) said: "Logical positivism, then, is dead, or as dead as a philosophical movement ever becomes" (p. 56).
14. In *Knowledge and Error,* Mach (1905/1976, p. 17) says: "Sensations, being both physical and mental, form the basis of all mental experience." In *Space and Geometry* (1901-1903/1960, p. 39) he says: "In the higher stages, attention is directed, not to space-sensations alone, but to those intricate and intimate *complexes* of other sensations with space-sensations which we call bodies" (emphasis original).
15. See Popper (1945/1967, Vol. 2, pp. 212–223).
16. For a discussion of the issue of relativism, see Barnes and Bloor (1982), Hollis and Lukes (1982), Geertz (1984), Bernstein (1988), Krausz (1989), and Rorty (1991).
17. For a detailed discussion of the origins and implications of Locke's notion of the mind as a *tabula rasa,* see Petryszak (1981).
18. In *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant (A:51; B:75; 1781/1966, p. 45) said: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."
19. I have borrowed this interpretation of Fregean logic — that the rules for connecting symbols suggested in his form of logic or "pure" language would reflect the structure of the universe it was designed to represent — from W. T. Jones's *History of Western Philosophy* (1969, 2nd ed., Vol. 5, p. 154).
20. *Abādhita viṣayākarāntaḥkaraṇavṛttirhi pramā ityucyate.* Madhustidana Sarasvati (n.d./1928) in *Siddhantabindu* (p. 21).
21. For a useful discussion of these issues with particular reference to psychology, see Laurence D. Smith (1986, pp. 43–46).
22. In the case of self-understanding, it is only claims pertaining to the "social self" that may have to be justified to a community, not of scientists, but of "significant others" appropriate for the self in a given social situation. However, certain other aspects of the selfhood, such as pain, fear of death, or "existential despair," may belong to the inner solitude inaccessible to anyone else. Kurt Baier (1962) speaks forcefully in support of this principle, asserting that the final epistemic authority concerning private events rests with person whose private experience they belong to.
23. I am borrowing this phrase from T. H. Leahey's textbook of the history of psychology (1987, p. 25).

2

Person, Self, and Identity

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the concepts of person, self, and identity. These concepts have a long history and are often used with diverse and sometimes even contradictory meanings. Nevertheless, they are at the core of our conceptions of what it means to be a human being, and their varied conceptions reflect some of our highest ideals and aspirations. Throughout the history of both Western and Indian thought, the concept of self has had its strong advocates as well as staunch critics. The main points in the dialectical positions for and against the self will be examined later in this chapter. Before turning to this discussion, it is necessary to consider the concepts of person and personality, which provide the natural context and home for the varied conceptions of selfhood.

Person and Personality

Over a century has passed since Trendelenberg (1870/1910) wrote an authoritative account of the historical roots of the concepts of person and personality. In revisiting that history half a century ago, Marcel Mauss (1938/1985), a well-known anthropologist, noted that the concept of person *(personne* in French) "slowly developed over many centuries and through numerous vicissitudes" (p. 1). Mauss also pointed out how similar or equivalent concepts are found in many cultures around the world, among both "primitive" and "advanced" cultures, in the East as well as the West. The concept of person and its cognate, the self, have been shown to be variously influenced by medieval Christian thought (Moms, 1972/1987), by the European Enlightenment (Baumeister, 1986; Trendelenberg, 1870/1910), and by the rise of commerce and capitalism in modem Europe (Broughton, 1986). Recently, while commenting on Mauss's seminal essay, Carrithers (1985) has offered an alternate social history of the concept of self with a focus on its development in Buddhist thought in India. In the following pages, I shall first discuss the development of the concepts of person and self in Western thought in

light of the above-mentioned accounts before turning to parallel trends in Indian thought.

Although the terms *person* and *personality* are commonly used as synonyms, they have nevertheless acquired different meanings. While *person* connotes a human being with rights and duties, *personality* suggests distinct individuality. According to Trendelenberg (1870/1910), both meanings can be etymologically traced to the Latin root persona and to Green roots *prosopeion,* meaning mask, or *prosopon,* meaning face. The idea of personality as distinct individuality probably derives from the Roman adaptation of the Greek tradition of using masks in drama. It conveys the *outer appearance* of an individual, suggested by masks that hide the wearer's face. The reliance in contemporary psychology on externally observable behaviors for the sake of the measurement of personality makes sense against this background. The concept of personality also conveys a unity of character that lies "beneath the mask" (Monte, 1995), or common characteristics of one and the same individual playing different roles in different situations. This implies that personality refers to persistent features, or *traits,* of an individual that manifest across time and space.

It is necessary to sharply distinguish between *person* as an individual with rights and duties and *personality* as individuality, since the latter carries few, if any, of the ethicolegal implications of the former. It is my impression that, in the mainstream of contemporary psychology, there is an overemphasis on personality to the relative neglect of the ethicolegal significance of personhood. In the remainder of this section, I shall try to sketch the development of the concept of personhood in Western thought and identify parallel trends in Indian thought.

The Concept of Person in the Intellectual Social History of the West

The idea that human beings are not merely things or physical objects but something more is quite ancient. In ancient Greece, human beings were thought of as being capable of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, as well as virtue and vice. Aristotle elaborates this idea in *Nicomchean Ethics.* One of the central points in this work is that an individual could be praised and blamed for only voluntary actions, not for involuntary movements. Aristotle distinguished between an individual being moved by his or her own initiative, i.e., by will or "final cause," as opposed to being moved by an external force or "efficient cause," such as a charging animal or a moving vehicle. In other words, human beings are, above all, moral agents open to praise or blame or other rewards and punishments for what they choose to do. The Stoics are said to have followed this line of thought; they believed that only motives have moral significance, and considered performing one's duty a matter of great importance (Jones, 1969, 1975, Vol. 1, p. 331). According to Mauss (193811985, p. 18), the voluntarist views and personal ethics of

the Stoics informed the Roman conceptions of the individual and the law. Trendelenberg quotes Gaius (110–180 CE), a famous authority on Roman Law, who uses the term *persona* to designate the rights of all human beings without distinction, as opposed to things or objects that have no such rights. In ancient Rome, equal rights were granted only to free *men,* not to slaves or women. For millennia in the West, as in India, usually the term *man* designated persons, thus implicitly denying personhood to women. This gender bias in the usage of the term is paralleled in India by the use of the Sanskrit term *puraṣa* literally meaning man, to designate personhood. The matter of usage is not nominal; it has long reflected the differential privileges of men and women. For instance, as we shall see later in this section, in Canada, women were not considered persons by law, and hence were deemed ineligible to hold high public offices; this changed in 1929.

Focus on the concept of person has often implied individualist as opposed to collectivist focus and value. In *An Intellectual History of Psychology,* Daniel Robinson (1976, pp. 104 –106) has shown how an important shift occurred from group liability implied in Greek customs to *individual* responsibility articulated in Roman laws. According to Greek conceptions of justice, it was acceptable for the survivors of a murdered relative to take revenge against the killer's entire family, or even the entire town, thus admitting *collective* responsibility for the actions of individuals. By contrast, Roman law restricted guilt to the specific perpetrator without extending it to his or her relatives, descendants, or others. During the medieval era, when life in Europe was dominated by the social institutions of the Church, the basic principles of Christianity retained the focus of moral responsibility on the individual, continuing the influential tradition of Roman law. As noted by Colin Moms (1972/1987), "[a] sense of individual identity and value is implicit in belief in a God who has called each man by name, who has sought him out as a shepherd seeks his lost sheep" (p. 10). Accordingly, in the 4th century of the Christian Era, St. Augustine articulates the idea of *free will,* whereby on the Day of Judgment, God would hold each individual accountable for all actions he or she has freely chosen over alternatives courses available.

During Christianity's Reformation, individual responsibility became even more important, as Martin Luther challenged the Church's authority to grant indulgences to rich and powerful individuals for their sins. He stressed that each individual must face God on the Great Day without any mediation by the Catholic Church. The sense of individual responsibility encouraged by the Protestant ethic has been articulated as a major factor in the development of capitalism in Europe (Weber, 1904/1930). At any rate, with or without the direct effect of Reformation, in Europe around the turn of the 17th century a rapid rise of commerce and industry guided by the entrepreneurship of an increasingly powerful mercantile class began. As noted by John Broughton (1986, p. 147), the merchants, producers, and manufacturers in the capitalist system must experience life as self-making; they demand and defend individual rights in politics as they stand up in the

marketplace to make a fortune for themselves. Personhood as defined by individual rights and responsibilities and backed by a clear sense of individual identity was central to the social transformation of modem Europe.

The Articulation of Personhood During Europe's Age of Enlightenment

The Englishman John Locke was one of the most influential thinkers of the European Enlightenment. His contributions are particularly important in shaping the modem conceptions of personhood. According to Locke,

> Person ... is the name for this self.... It is a forensic term appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of law, and happiness, and misery. This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness,—whereby it becomes concerned and accountable; owns and imputes to itself past actions ... desiring that the self that is conscious should be happy. (1690/1959, pp. 466–467, emphasis original)

The first thing to note here is that, according to Locke, person is a forensic term: it applies to justice and the courts of law, and thus implies moral responsibilities and legal rights of an individual. Second, Locke specifies the psychological conditions that must be present for a person to be held responsible:

1. That a person is "intelligent," i.e., *knows* the rules of conduct applicable in the given situation.
2. That he or she *feels* happiness and misery that might result from a particular course of action, right or wrong.
3. That he or she *acts* (i.e., is an agent) so as to be able to attain an intended result of his or her action.

Elsewhere in the same section of his book, Locke clarifies that, to be held responsible, it is necessary to ensure that the person accused of wrongdoing is the same as the one who was witnessed while actually committing the alleged crime. In other words, the ethicolegal conception of personhood is inextricably connected with the notion of personal identity. Says Locke: "In this personal identity is founded all the right and justice of reward and punishment; happiness and misery being that for which every one is concerned for himself" (1690/1959, p. 459).

Locke's ideas became an integral part of the thinking of such major scholars of the European Enlightenment as Butler, Reid, Hume, and Kant. All of these men clarified and elaborated the basic ideas of the Lockean view of personhood. As we shall see later, Hume and Kant proposed radically different views on how to account for personal identity, and their lines of thinking generated an active debate that continues till this date. For Immanuel Kant, arguably the most important figure of the Enlightenment, person is a key concept, a thing of highest value. In "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals," Kant (178Y1909) said:

"Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature's, have ... only a relative value as means, and are therefore called *things,* rational beings, on the contrary, are called *persons,* because their very nature points them out as ends in themselves" (p. 46, emphasis original). In *Critique of Judgment,* Kant (1790/1987) said: "We can reduce all the powers of the mind, without exception, to these three: the *cognitive power,* the *feeling of pleasure and displeasure,* and the *power of desire"* (p. 394, emphasis original). Following this, he explains in detail how moral as well as esthetic judgments are possible only through the joint working of these powers. It should be clear from this that Kant affirms the Lockean idea that cognition, affect, and conation constitute the basic psychological conditions of personhood.

The influence of Locke's ideas of personhood was not restricted either to philosophy or to Europe; they shaped political, legal, and social life well beyond the European continent. In *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution,* Bernard Bailyn (1967) notes that in "pamphlet after pamphlet American writers cited Locke on natural rights" (p. 27). In *A History of Western Philosophy,* W. T. Jones (1969) says: "The spirit of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights was thoroughly Lockian; indeed, the American political ideal today is still the Lockian state" (Vol. 3, p. 279). Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes (1985, p. viii) have observed (and rightly so, in my opinion) that the ethicolegal conception of personhood has become the cornerstone of modem political, social, and legal institutions in Western societies. Indeed, the idea of persons as individuals with human rights is central to liberal democracies around the world today. The declaration of human rights by the United Nations is a reflection of the worldwide influence of an ethicolegal conception of personhood. Many of us today strive to enshrine individual rights in constitutions, seek to clarify each individual's responsibilities in local, national, and international institutions, and try to protect human rights in every comer of the world, wherever they might be in danger.

The Variable Boundaries of Personhood

Although the term person normally applies only to human beings, its legal definition includes corporations that are endowed with rights and duties like those of individual citizens. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that such usage of the term was in vogue in the English language as early as in the mid-15th century, i.e., a long time before Locke. Over the centuries, with the rise of worldwide trade and commerce, such a broad conception of personhood has become widespread and well entrenched, regulating and ensuring the rights of individuals, corporations, and governments at all levels. Corporations, like persons, are given rights to own property and to conduct industrial and commercial activities and are also expected to pay taxes and to make amends for injuries or damages resulting from

their activities. The sprawling growth of multinational corporations in today's world is suggestive of the acceptance of the rights of corporations to do business in nearly every country. While on the one hand rights and duties are thus assigned to artificial entities like corporations, they are, on the other hand, denied to innumerable human beings. As noted, in ancient Rome all free men were supposed to have equal rights, but slaves and women were not. Similarly, during the late 18th century when the American Constitution was framed, rights to liberty and equality were extended only to white men. The aboriginal peoples had neither the obligation to pay taxes nor the privilege to vote. Most African Americans, who were then called Negroes, could not own property; as slaves, they were themselves owned and treated like chattel or any other type of property. Indeed, it is interesting to see how the personhood of negroes was viewed during the American constitutional debates, for it points to an important aspect of the way in which rights and duties of human beings are sometimes treated.

In 1787, as American politicians sat down to negotiate the rules of election of representatives for the new House of Congress, the southerners realized that the more populous northern states would send a greater number of representatives, and thus wield more power. To offset that advantage, the southern states tried to use the large number of slaves on their farms to their own advantage. After considerable bargaining, they came up with a compromise. Section 2 of Article I of the original US Constitution read: "Representatives ,,. shall be apportioned among the several States ... according to their Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons ... excluding Indians not taxed, and three fifths of all other Persons." The records of constitutional debates (Hunt & Scott, 1920) clarify that the number of "free men" meant the "number of white inhabitants" (p. 243).[1] The idea of "three fifths of all other Persons" makes it appear as if personhood was considered to be measurable in exact fractions, and that it was actually granted to nonwhites in some form of fractional voting rights. In fact, no slaves were allowed to vote either fully or partly; it is just that white southern politicians grabbed some additional power in proportion to the number of slaves in their states. The "three fifths" rule was repealed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution in 1868. At any rate, this episode in American history illustrates the ways in which the concept of person has been open to interpretation in various ways. An example from the history of 20th-century Canada will illustrate a different variety of the twists and turns in the continual redefinition of the concept.

In 1927, the Governor General of Canada nominated a woman, Henrietta Muir Edwards, to the country's Senate. Given the historical incapacity of women to hold office under the traditional British common law, this appointment was blocked. In response, Edwards and her suffragette friends contested the decision in the courts in a famous lawsuit that has come to be known as the "Persons Case."[2] The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1928 that women were not persons

and were therefore ineligible to hold public office. During the following year, this judgment was reversed by the judicial Committee of the Privy Council (see Edwards v. Attorney General ofCanada, in *Western WeeklyReports,* 1929, Vol. 3, pp. 479-495), saying that "the exclusion ofwomen from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours" (p. 481), thereby clearing the way for the appointment ofits first woman nominee to the Canadian senate. This is a small but important vignette from the long and arduous history of women's continuing struggle for equal rights. Regardless ofthe gains made recently by the international feminist movement, women in major parts of the world from Japan through the Islamic countries are still treated as if they were not persons.

The idea offractionation or quantification ofpersonhood suggested by three-fifths rule would seem odd indeed. Nevertheless, to the extent that personhood is a matter of rights and duties, it is a matter of degree rather than all or nothing. Rights and duties are not assigned to a human being suddenly and in full at birth, nor do they disappear completely upon death. Rights and duties accrue gradually with the maturation ofthe individual to "adulthood," which is defined differently in different places and times. Various markers of adulthood, such as the age of eligibility to vote or get married, or the age at which one is held fully responsible and must face criminal charges in adult court, are arbitrarily set and continually revised. With old age, rights such as right to work, as well as responsibilities such as paying taxes or fees at the full adult rate, diminish in many societies. The time when a growing fetus becomes a person is far less precisely defined than the age of granting of adult status. Is abortion in the third trimester ofpregnancy any more serious a crime than taking a "day after" pill to get rid of the zygote that might have been conceived during the previous night? Such dilemmas are at the basis of the hot debate currently raging between the advocates ofprochoice versus prolife viewpoints. They illustrate the complexities of the varied processes whereby a speck of protoplasm becomes a "person" with rights, including the most fundamental right to a life of some sort. The rights ofpersons do not disappear suddenly at death either. Consider, for instance, the passions aroused by bone fragments found at a spot believed to be a community's burial site in ancient times. Anyone, whether or not a biological successor ofthe ancients, might legitimately demand that the remains of ancient human bodies deserve to be treated with dignity-the kind of dignity that any living human being at any time should deserve.

THE CONSTRUCTED NATURE, VARIABILITY, AND COMPARABILITY OF CONCEPTIONS OF PERSONHOOD

The point of the discussion in this chapter so far should be clear: An individual's rights and duties expand and contract across cultures, over centuries, and even within the course of a life cycle. The rights and duties associated with personhood are not fixed; they change — grow or shrink — with the community's

changing ethos in the course of history. Thus, personhood, insofar as it is a matter of individuals' rights and duties, is socially constructed and is continually reconstructed. In recent years, some anthropologists and cultural psychologists have started to show how personhood is constructed differently in different cultures (e.g., Miller, 1991). If personhood is socially constructed, then it is reasonable to expect that concepts of personhood should vary from culture to culture as they do from time to time within the same culture. It should be no surprise that some anthropologists have noted the distinctive features of the conception of personhood in the West. Thus, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1975) asserted that

> the Western conception of person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures. (p. 48)

Geertz's observations confirm my observations mentioned earlier that in the intellectual history of the West, personhood is conceived of in an individualist way, and that cognition, emotion, and action are considered to be its central features. But are these features of Western conceptions of personhood so peculiar and unique as to stand out in such sharp contrast against the backdrop of cultures across the world? I am not a cultural anthropologist and I do not have either broad knowledge of world cultures comparable to experienced anthropologists like Geertz or cross-cultural empirical data to assess the universality or relativity of conceptions of personhood like those presented by Shweder and Bourne (1984). However, from my understanding of Indian and Western cultures, it is my impression that the specific features of the Western conception of personhood noted by Geertz are not so unique to the Western world as he makes them appear.

If conceptions of personhood were highly unique, then comparing them would be as unreasonable as comparing "apples and oranges," as the expression goes. Indeed, I would like to show that the traditional Indian conception of personhood shares many of the prominent features of the Western concept of personhood noted by Geertz, namely its individualist character and the central place it gives to cognition, feeling, and action. Certainly there are many ways in which changing Indian and Western conceptions of personhood have been different from one another. Nevertheless, it is my impression that in being strongly individualist and in having a central place for cognition, affect, and conation, there is a sufficient enough degree of comparability in traditional Indian and Western conceptions of personhood to warrant their meaningful comparison. In the following section, I hope to point out that such features stand out in the classical accounts of personhood in the intellectual history of India.

There is no single Indian concept that can be cited as an exact equivalent of either *persona* in Latin, *person* in English, or *personne* in French, but the Sanskrit

term *puruṣa,* literally meaning *man,* can be said to be its closest equivalent. Such approximate matching should hardly be surprising because different languages represent the same world in different ways —like different maps of the same territory using different legends. Even as Geertz has noted certain peculiarities of the Western conception of personhood, other scholars have suggested that East–West differences in conceptions of personhood are basic and substantial. For instance, in his book on the discovery of the individual in medieval Europe, Colin Morris 1972/1987) has suggested that the "Asiatic and Eastern tradition of thought has set much less store by the individual than the West has done" (p. 2). In Moms's view, the value placed on the individual, reflected in Kant's dictum that a man must be treated as an end and never as means, is the cornerstone of European ethics. This form of individualism, he claims, is distinctively a Western value, which is absent in the East. In my earlier work (Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 71–78), I have argued that the Indian conception of personhood is also individualistic, except that it manifests a different kind of individualism. To put it simply, while in the West the emphasis is generally on the individual *rights* in the sociopolitical sphere, in the Indian tradition the emphasis is on the individual's *obligations* and status in the ethical and spiritual domains. In the indigenous religious and spiritual traditions of India, the individual is held responsible for the consequences of his or her actions, and spiritual development is not possible except by one's own effort and self-realization.

Individualism is of course a highly controversial issue. On the positive side, individualism implies robust self-reliance, the idea of the inalienable right and inescapable obligation of the individual to act according to one's conscience and the courage to stand up against the oppression of an errant authority or a mindless mob. On the negative side, individualism is often laced with noxious self-serving, greed, and socially destructive self-interest. This kind of individualism has been despised by many, and rightly so in my opinion. There is also another, *epistemic* variety of individualism that sees knowledge as grounded in subjective experience, and this invokes a different type of fear - the desolate fear of Berkeleyan solipsism. It is not my purpose here to either defend or criticize individualism, for I am aware of both its positive and negative sides. In the present work, I shall try to steer clear of the varied concerns over the conceptualization of individualism versus collectivism in contemporary cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Triandis, 1990), and also avoid discussing the issue of whether the person as conceived in the Indian culture is an individual or a "dividual" (Marriott, 1976; Potter, 1980). My main concern here is whether or not there is, in the Indian culture, an ethicolegal conception of personhood that posits the *individual* as the basis of moral and legal concerns. As I shall presently try to show, in the intellectual and cultural tradition of India, the individual rather than the group has been the focus of moral responsibility for ages, regardless of the fact that individual rights have long been closely tied to the category or caste assigned by birth.

Personhood in the Cultural and Intellectual History of India

The concept of personhood is inextricably intertwined with conceptions of broader entities such as the state, law, religion, and cosmic order in which it is embedded. In the Indian context, unlike anything in the West, the most relevant aspect of the culture in regard to personhood is *dharma* a Sanskrit term with many varied meanings such as law, religion, duty, or simply qualities and properties of persons and things. Of the many meanings of *dharma,* its ethicolegal conception as duty or rules of conduct is the most relevant here. The most authoritative work on this topic is P. V. Kane's (1930–1977) multivolume *History of Dhamidstra,* i.e., the history of the *science of dharma.* In it Kane defines *dharma* as "the privileges, duties and obligations of a man *[sic],* his standard of conduct as a member of the Aryan community, as a member of one of the castes, as a person in a particular stage of life" (1968, Vol. 1, p. 3). It is important to note here that first of all the *dharma* pertained to the Aryan community; indeed, it clearly excluded the aliens, called the *mlecchas* just as the American concept of personhood excluded the nonwhite people. Second, its focus was on men rather than women; in Sanskrit, as in English, the primary term for personhood has been *purusa* meaning *man,* and such usage conveys the privileged status of men and the lack thereof for women. Third, in India as elsewhere, rights and duties were defined separately for various segments of the society divided by age and social category or "caste." In the context of the Hindu *dhārma,* caste implies *varṇa,* or one the four social categories -the priests *(brahmaya),* warriors *(kṣatriya),* traders *(vaiśya),* and artisans *(śūdra)* The stages of life as conventionally defined are the four asramas: first, a period of youth devoted to learning *(brahmucarya);* second, adulthood in which one plays householder *(gṛhastha);* third, late adulthood of a semiretired elder *(vānaprashtha);* and fourth, old age in which one becomes a renunciative senior citizen *(saṃnyāsa).* This aspect of *dharma* has been conventionally designated as the *vārnaśrama dharma.*

It is well recognized in the literature that when compared with the Western tradition, the Hindu tradition emphasized *duties* of the individual more than *rights* (Sathe, 1967; Talghatti, 1974). According to this tradition, a *puruṣa* (or man) is enjoined to pursue four major goals in life: (1) conducting one's duties as prescribed for the person's caste and station in life *(dharma),* (2) the pursuit of wealth *(artha),* (3) the fulfillment of one's (legitimate) desires *(kāma),* and (4) the attainment of release *(mokṣa)* from the cycle of birth and death. In the millennial history of India prior to its modernization under the British rule, privileges and duties of persons were generally not defined by legislative or administrative bodies as in Europe. Rather, rules of conduct were codified by scholars in texts such as the *dharmasūtras* of Gautama, Āpastamba, and Vasistha (ca. 500–300BCE), and in various codes of *smṛtis* like those of Manu and Yajñavalkya (ca. 200BCE-300CE).

Such scholars in law and jurisprudence were guided by (1) the ancient scriptures called the *Vedas* or *śrutis* in which truth was supposed to have been revealed to the sages, (2) the philosophical exposition of the scriptural doctrines in systems such as Mīmāmsā Sāṅkhya and so on, as well as (3) the prevailing customs of their era. Regardless of their apparently "religious" background, these codes were not backed by institutions like the church or by any ecclesiastical authorities similar to the bishops or the Pope. The implementation was left to the king, whose enforcement authorities were guided by the codes prevalent in their region and era as elucidated by the *smṛtis*. Unlike the truths revealed in the scriptures, which were considered eternal, the codes of conduct described in the *smṛtis* were assumed to be subject to variation across time and region. Over the millennia, hundreds of interpretative essays *(nibandhas)* were composed; some 40 interpretive essays have been counted on the single topic of the adoption of children, and many more on other topics.

As noted, from the earliest times various rights and duties were extended only to the Ārya community, and within its boundaries they were distributed differentially among fourfold divisions by *varna* or caste, and *āśramas,* or stages of the life cycle. Historical accounts of the Hindu society cast doubts as to whether such clear-cut divisions actually existed in any era. It is fairly clear, however, that except for very rare instances, caste membership was determined entirely by birth, which in turn determined occupation and the resulting socioeconomic status of the individual. While the two upper castes were accorded rights to initiation and the privilege to learn the scriptures, the same were denied to the lower castes and to all women. In addition to the four *varna* categories, a fifth category *(pañacamavarna)* was added during some unknown era. Its members were forced to live outside the village boundaries, were denied many of the basic human rights, such as access to water, and were treated with the worst form of indignities, such as untouchability. The practice of untouchability and other forms of discrimination have been abolished since 1950, according to the Constitution of independent India that was framed, among others, by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, himself an ex-untouchable.

The age-old system of inequities is strongly and widely repudiated in contemporary India; only an insignificant minority dares to openly affirm the ancient code of the *Manusmṛti.* Indeed, in the past few years, the term *manuvāda* or *manuism* is becoming a political swear word used to denigrate various conservative parties. Along with many other parts of the world, India is slowly marching toward an egalitarian social system. Reverse discrimination and reserved quotas for the historically underprivileged sections of the communities in legislative bodies and institutes of higher education are prominent among the measures adopted to help restore social justice. The uneven distribution of rights is a persistent and widespread irritant that most of us would want to wish out of existence. The issue of how to establish equality and justice in the world, however important, is beyond

the scope of the present work. The issue that I wish to focus on here is the psychology of personhood, which is a necessary precondition for individual responsibility under any system of rights and duties.

The Individual as the Basis of Action and Its Consequences as Viewed in Indian Thought

Regardless of the regional, communal, and temporal variations in the conceptions of rights and duties, and of right and wrong, in the intellectual history of India there arose a worldview in which justice was supposed to be preserved by a moral order governed by a cosmic law. This conception of lawfulness of the universe has come to be known as the "Law of Karma." This law is conceived as a cosmic principle whereby each person must inevitably face appropriate consequences for all of his or her actions, whether good, bad, or indifferent. The Indian view of personhood is inextricably tied to a belief in a moral order defined by the Law of Karma. Belief in such a law is nearly universal throughout the known history of India; except for the small minority of the "materialist" Lokāyata school of thought, it is shared by most orthodox as well as unorthodox schools of Indian thought. Indeed, its influence extends to most Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists, and it is widespread even outside the Indian subcontinent wherever Buddhism has extended its influence. We shall later discuss the Law of Karma in some detail, first as part of the Advaita Vedāntic view of person, self, and identity in the next chapter, and then again in Chapter 6 in connection with its implications for the concept of self-as-agent. Here, it will be useful to see how in his *History of Dharmaśāstra,* P. V. Kane traces the historical roots of the individualistic notion of personhood and responsibility in the context of the Law of Karma.

Kane traces the origins of the concept of individual responsibility to the most ancient writings of the Indian tradition, namely the *Ṛg Veda* (6.86.9, where the sage Vassistha prays: "May we not have to suffer for the sin committed by another."[3] "The strict doctrine of Karma would require," says Kane, "that there can be no transfer of good or bad *karma* from one man *[sic]* to another and a man cannot suffer for the sins of others." In support of this conclusion, he quotes the following statement from epic *Mahābhārata* which crisply articulates the point: "Whatever deed a man does, whether holy or very unholy (terrible), the consequences of that are experienced by the doer alone, what have the relatives to do with that [?]"[4] (Kane, 1968, Vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1595). Kane goes on to discuss a few apparent exceptions to this "individualist" principle in the vast literature on *dharma* Such instances, he says, are "not meant to be taken literally" (p. 1596); they are just ways of impressing on the kings or the householders the importance of the duties of their respective roles.

Recently, Rama Rao Pappu (1987) has noted some exceptions to the thesis that karma is necessarily individual, nontransferable, and inexorable. But such

instances are rare. Indeed, in Indian thought, God has been believed to be a mere overseer of the proper functioning of the Law of Karma *(karmādhyakṣa)* and is powerless to interfere with its invincible operation. The *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (6.11) describes God as a mere witness *(sākṣin)* not an agent. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (6.5), Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to recognize that a person alone is his own friend as well as enemy, and exhorts him to uplift himself by his own effort rather than choosing the path of ruin. In the same vein, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (5, 14–15) asserts that the Lord *(prabhu)* does not create agency for the people, nor does he act; all-pervading *(vibhu)* he takes on the sin or merit of no one. Yet, elsewhere in the Gītā (18.66) the Lord seems to forsake his impartiality by offering to release Arjuna from all his sins. Further, the many thinkers in the devotionalist *(bhakti)* tradition acknowledge the efficacy of God's grace in annulling the demerit of His devotees, which implies compromising the strict operation of the Law of Karma. But the idea of grace has been controversial, to say the least. Tukārām a 17th-century saint–poet and famous devotee of the Lord Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharpur says (in poem #2325) that liberation *(mokṣa)* is not a gift that God could bestow on anyone whom he would wish to pick by his sweet will[5] (see Tukārām 1973, p. 398).

In any case, as noted by Halbfass (1991a), "Karma is supposed to be personal, i.e., attached to one individual being or life process" (p. 299). It is hard to find clear instances in the Indian tradition where shared or collective merit or demerit is accepted. Although members of a caste collectively share certain privileges as well as the lack thereof, these are considered but rewards or punishments of a person's own merit and demerit, respectively. That individuals are thereby induced to resign themselves to a life of lower social status and lack of privileges due to their own past actions is patently contrary to the egalitarian values of our era. Without trying in any way to justify this implication, it should be nevertheless clear that, by and large, the traditional Indian conception of personhood is essentially individualistic. Even under the current constitution that reflects the egalitarian principles enshrined by its architects such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the individual person continues to be held responsible for his or her own actions.

Cognition, Affect, and Conation: The Psychological Conditions of Personhood

An upshot of the above discussion is that in the Indian tradition, as in the Western, the human individual is considered to be an *agent.* Most clearly, an agentic conception of personhood has been common to the Indian and Western traditions regardless of the many differences in terms of the varying conceptions of who qualifies to be a person, what their rights and responsibilities might be, and how justice could be ensured. There is another important similarity in Indian and Western conceptions of personhood in that cognition, affect, and conation are accepted as psychological conditions of personhood in both traditions. As noted

earlier, John Locke conceived of persons as having to have the capacities for understanding, feeling, and freedom of will, and that cognition, affect, and conation were conceived of as integral aspects of personhood by major thinkers of the Enlightenment. A similar conception appears in Indian thought since as early as the Upanisads. First, several Upanisads (e.g., *Praśna* 4.9, *Maitrī,* 3.2-3) clearly conceive of man *(puruṣa)* or self *(ātman)* as agent *(kartā)* Moreover, the agentic individual is also simultaneously and repeatedly considered to be a knower *(jñātā)* and as one who enjoys and suffers *(bhoktā)* in several Upanisads.[6] The tripartite designation of the person as one who knows, feels, and acts *(jñātā, bhoktā* and *kartā)* repeatedly appears in numerous Indian texts, including the highly influential *Bhagavad-Gītā.* If any set of ideas deserves to serve as a conceptual bridge between Indian and Western thought, these two trilogies definitely qualify, and in the remainder of this volume I intend to use them as such. Moreover, as noted earlier in connection with our discussion of Locke's view of personhood, cognition, affect, and action provide the conceptual foundation for a psychological model of person as a responsible human being. This idea needs further clarification at this point.

There is a basic logical connection between the concept of responsibility and the trilogy of cognition, affect, and conation. First, let us consider cognition. The possession of an adequate level of cognitive capacities is obviously an essential condition of responsible action. For want of such capacities, a person may not understand the prevailing rules of conduct and may fail to grasp the difference between proper and improper behavior under the given conditions. A deficit in the cognitive capacities, whether permanent or temporary, would definitely undermine the capacity for ethical conduct. For instance, a mentally challenged or intellectually "retarded" person, who may have never developed cognitive capacities necessary for comprehending the terms and conditions of a complex contract, cannot be expected to enter into a complex contract, nor can he or she be held responsible for abiding by its conditions. In a similar vein, one who has temporarily lost the use of normal cognitive capabilities under special circumstances, such as being dazed by drugs or being in a place where the local language is not understood, cannot be expected to behave responsibly as he or she would be under normal circumstances.

Second, the capacity to feel pleasure or pain is another equally important precondition for action in an ethicolegal context. A robot that lacks the capacity for pleasure and pain cannot be rewarded or punished, nor can it be held responsible for causing injury or loss of life. By contrast, the idea of rewarding and punishing animals does make sense to the extent that it is safe to believe that animals, like people, feel pleasure in eating or being caressed and pain when beaten or shocked. By the same token, it makes no sense to either feed, caress, or shock a robot to teach it new tricks, no matter how "intelligent" it might be. It is on the basis of the assumption that animals are conscious of pain and pleasure that the idea of

"animals' rights" makes sense (Salt, 1892/1980); nobody talks about the right of robots, for we cannot even imagine that they could experience pain or pleasure. A reward must be pleasurable or otherwise desirable in the eyes of the recipient. It is meaningless, for instance, to reward a blind person with a color TV or a teetotaler with a bottle of the finest whisky. Contrariwise, punishment would be meaningless if the recipient found it pleasurable or otherwise desirable. There is no point, for instance, in handing solitary confinement as punishment to a hermit who has voluntarily chosen to be a recluse. All this is simple common sense, and there should be no reason to belabor the point. Yet it seems necessary to say this against the background of the peculiar history of modem learning theory and behavioristic psychology where the discussion of the relationship of pain and pleasure with reward and punishment was generally avoided.

Toward the end of the 19th century, when E. L. Thorndike stated the famous laws of learning, he was well aware of the role of pleasure and pain in reward and punishment. While articulating the Law of Effect to help explain the connection between stimulus and response, he said: "The greater the satisfaction or discomfort, the greater the strengthening or weakening of the bond" (Thorndike, 1898). To the behaviorist Watson, however, the use of such terms as satisfaction or discomfort, pleasure or pain, was unacceptable, since they were unobservable, and hence inadmissible in the "science" of psychology. While commenting on Thorndike's use of such terms in the 1920s, Watson (1924/1970) scoffed at them by referring to them as "implanted by kind fairies" (p. 206). Decades later, Skinner, who was keener than Watson in avoiding mentalisms and in turning psychology into a physical science, decided that it was neither possible nor necessary to use terms like pleasure, pain, and satisfaction. Trying to bypass such terms, he redefined reinforcement purely in terms of externally observable features of the behavior of organisms such as their tendency to repeat or avoid a given class of responses (see Skinner, 1953, pp. 81–84). The price of such insistence on objectivity was the *objectification* of animals and the *depersonalization* of humans.

While depersonalization of human beings occurs in the behaviorist model because the psychologist refuses to recognize the experience of feelings, it results in real life when the capacity to feel emotions is lost or diminished under certain circumstances. Indeed, several psychological studies of the 1960s and the early 1970s demonstrate how the loss of capacity to experience appropriate emotions at appropriate time leads to depersonalization. Consider, for instance, one of Milgram's famous studies of obedience where experimental subjects placed in a group situation gave more severe shocks to learners for their mistakes than when the subject was alone; apparently the feelings of guilt for causing pain to the learner was diluted when distributed in a group (Milgram, 1964). Or consider individuals in urban crowds who seem to lose a sense of shame in not helping a person under attack (Latané & Darley, 1968) or in failing to stop vandalism (Zimbardo, 1970). In earlier times, a different, fictional variety of loss of normal feelings was

described by Albert Camus (1946/1967) in his novel, *The Outsider.* In it the hero does not feel sorry while sitting at his mother's funeral, nor guilty while shooting a stranger at someone else's suggestion for no good reason. Such emotional impropriety is said to result from the condition of alienation and existential despair. A more common variety of misplaced or blunted emotion is found among some schizophrenics and psychopaths. A psychopath's incapacity to feel guilty when appropriate might lead him or her first to crime and then to jail. A similar incapacity, when attributed to schizophrenia, might warrant therapy rather than incarceration. Crimes of passion are often viewed as deserving of leniency, because it is considered natural for a person to be unable to think clearly in moments of rage or extreme despair. In other words, unimpaired capacity to experience emotions appropriate to the situation is a necessary condition for fully responsible behavior. The capacity to feel emotions appropriate to the occasion is therefore an inalienable condition of personhood.

Finally, conation or the capacity to freely choose, initiate, and sustain a course of action toward an intended outcome is the third indispensable precondition for a person to be a responsible human being. A person is held responsible only for a consciously intended course of action and not for the consequences of inadvertent actions. Thus, a person is not held responsible for the injury of a bystander who is bumped when the person accidentally falls on a slippery floor or even for a death caused by accidentally triggering a gun. On the other hand, if a person is known to have intentions to hurt someone, he or she is considered culpable even if the actual consequences of the action are harmless. That is why complicity in planning a criminal act such as robbery or murder is thought to be worthy of punishment, even if the plans are aborted. Moreover, a person cannot be blamed for not helping another in crisis if his or her hands are tied at that time. Freedom and volition are undoubtedly the necessary conditions for responsible behavior.

The Rise and Fall of Personhood and the "Trilogy of Mind"

The processes of thinking, feeling, and volition taken together have been called the "trilogy of mind," and are often equated with the mind as a whole or with consciousness in general. In his historical account of the trilogy of mind, Hilgard (1980) has shown how the trilogy of mind was articulated throughout the 18th century in Germany and Scotland. He has noted that the Scottish school of "common-sense philosophers" from Thomas Reid (1710–1796) to Duglad Stewart (1788–1856) made the trilogy of mind a central part of a full-fledged *faculty psychology.* Influential authors such as Alexander Bain (1868) and G. E Stout (1899/1929) in England emphasized cognition, feeling, and will. Stout's *Manual of Psychology* was published in 1899 and remained a most influential text for decades in the United Kingdom as well as India. During that era, the centrality of the trilogy for psychology seemed natural and unchangeable. According to Hilgard (1980, p.

114), McDougall's (1923) *Outline of Psychology* was the last major work featuring the trilogy of mind as a central topic. After that landmark, the joint treatment of cognition, affect, and conation rapidly declined.

Hilgard's authoritative account of the history of the trilogy of the mind says a lot about its rise but very little about the reasons for its decline. The only sentence he writes about this suggest that "... the fading of such a 'generally accepted' view may have coincided with the decline of what Gordon Allport called the synoptic theories" (Hilgard, 1980, p. 114). I have found Hilgard's suggestion most useful, for it offers important clues in understanding how and why, during the first half of the 20th century, North American psychology witnessed the simultaneous decline of the trilogy on the one hand and of personhood on the other. Allport's (1940) paper, which was cited by Hilgard in this connection, defends *synoptic* (i.e., holistic) theories as being useful in the study of personality; this was in contrast to the analytical or molecularistic viewpoints recommended by Arthur Bills' (1938) criticism of Allport's (1937) pioneering work in personality. Bills' main criticism was that in his account of personality, Allport had failed to adhere to the credo of science, which he described as empirical, mechanistic, quantitative, nomothetic, analytic, and as characterized by the use of operational concepts (Bills, 1938, p. 378).

Allport did not disagree with this characterization of the scientific credo; in fact, he cited observations from his own historical survey of psychology showing that psychology had in fact moved in that direction over the previous half century. What Allport tried to argue in his own defense was that the natural science perspective is in fact inimical to the study of personhood and he pleaded for some indulgence in order to accommodate such study. "Why not allow psychology as a science - for science is a broad and beneficent term - to be also *rational, teleological, qualitative, idiographic, synoptic,* and even *nonoperational?"* asked Allport (1940, p. 26, emphasis original). Even a superficial examination of the terms italicized in this quote would indicate how they are essential to the study of personhood, and how the opposite orientation is inimical to it. I have discussed the issue elsewhere in greater detail (Paranjpe, 1991a; 1998). Here, a brief indication of the basic points is necessary.

For the founding fathers of modern psychology, the main departure from tradition was the application of the natural science approach to the study of human beings. For behaviorists such as Skinner, this meant following Francis Bacon, and replacing philosophical speculation, rationalist argumentation, and teleological explanation with, respectively, scientific experimentation, empirical observation, and causal explanation, As natural scientists, psychologists must restrict their investigation to external stimuli or other observable factors in the environment that caused a given behavior, say, trigger pulling or ingestion of poison, and they must be unconcerned with the reasons and intentions behind it. The psychologists should be like the physicists and biochemists, who may ascertain the precise nature

of the impact of a bullet or poison that must have caused a death, but who leave it for the coroner to decide whether the death was accidental, suicidal, or homicidal. After all, motives, intentions, or reasons behind an action are neutral to the physicochemical causes that might bring about the intended result; the impact of a bullet or the chemical action of a poison will lead to the same consequence regardless of who might have shot the bullet or fed the poison, and with what intention. Insofar as the scientific model restricts itself to causal analysis, it has little to add to the study of personhood as an ethicolegal concept. By contrast, notwithstanding its general affinity to the natural science model and its use of empirical methodology, the Piagetian approach has fashioned ways to study moral reasoning, thereby accommodating the ethicolegal view of personhood. If being a person implies having intentions and translating them into action, then avoiding teleological explanations implies a banishing of personhood. We shall return to a detailed discussion of the issue of teleological versus mechanistic accounts of behavior in Chapter 6, which is devoted to the self-as-agent.

The quantitative and nomothetic approaches are another feature of the scientific credo that modern psychology tried to adopt. "Nomothetic" implies an approach designed to discover general or universal laws. Newton's laws of motion and the precise quantitative methods of measuring motion of celestial and terrestrial objects are obvious examples of the success of the natural scientific approach. Certainly such laws apply to human bodies as well as to lunar objects, as do the laws of electricity that help explain the nature of electrical and magnetic potentials in the brain. However, human behavior is governed not only by the universal laws of physics and chemistry, but also by written laws passed by legislators and by unwritten rules of conduct that evolve in communities. What advocates of nomotheticism and universal generalization, from Bills (1938) through Eysenck (1954) to Poortinga (1993), tend to ignore is that understanding persons implies judging their actions in relation to socially constructed codes of conduct that vary from time to time and across communities. What is important in the sociolegal context is to see whether a particular act of a particular person conforms to local regulations of the time. This is where qualititative evaluations of the act matter the most, not quantitative measurements demonstrating their conformity to universal laws. As well, ethicolegal judgments pertain to particular actions of particular persons, such that knowing how the universal laws apply in regard to the action(s) in question is irrelevant. During the 1930s through the 1960s, the understanding of particular persons was the concern of only a minority of "personologists" such as Henry Murray (1938/1962), Gordon W. Allport (1946), and Robert W. White (1952/1966). Of the small number of personologists, Allport (1961) was often alone in defending the "idiographic" approach that focuses on single individuals. Many, like Arthur Bills and Hans Eysenck, rejected - even denigrated - such a focus on particular persons in the name of science. Eysenck, in particular, asserted the nomothetic viewpoint by invoking (albiet in a translated version) a medieval

scholastic dictum: *"scientia non est individuorum,"* i.e., science does not deal with individual cases (see Eysenck, 1952, p.18). In the same vein, Robert Holt (1962) insisted that general laws of probability as understood and applied by actuaries are good enough for the psychologist's business of prediction of individual behavior. Further, Holt (1962) ridiculed Allport's appeal for understanding unique individuals from their own vantage point by declaring that "understanding is the subjective effect arrived at by artists, not by scientists" (p. 389).

The immense success of the natural sciences depends at least partly on their strategy to divide entities or phenomena to be studied into their component parts. This analytical approach is applied to psychology in a couple of different ways: in considering reflex responses or stimulus–response units as basic building blocks of behavior and in focusing on innumerable "variables" as determinants of behavior as psychologists routinely do. While such analytic strategies are undoubtedly useful in their own right, their usefulness, if any, is limited in understanding persons in an ethicolegal sense. For, in the ethicolegal context, the conduct of the person must be placed in the broader sociocultural milieu, which warrants a synoptic (i.e., holistic) view of the person. It is my impression that the preference of an analytic over a synoptic view under the dominance of the scientific perspective has resulted in compartmentalizing the subject matter of psychology. Thus, cognition, emotion, and motivation were treated as if they were separate components rather than differing aspects of the integral functioning of the person as a whole. Looking at the accounts of child development first from a Piagetian cognitive perspective and then from a Freudian psychodynamic viewpoint, one begins to wonder if prelogical thinking and the Oedipal complexes occur in the same children or in separate ones.

The separate treatment of cognition and affect has led to the sequestering of cognitive psychologists from behaviorists so as to discourage their interaction. At the same time, the assumption of cognition and feeling as separate phenomena has led to the strange notion that they somehow interact. Moreover, the fractionation of the trilogy of the mind has led to sterile controversies over which comes first, cognition or feeling, in either temporal order or in order of importance (Zajonc, 1980, 1984; Lazarus, 1982, 1984). The ultimate manifestation of the analytic approach is of course in the molecularization of the mind illustrated in E. B. Titchener's (1896) fruitless search for the elements of consciousness. The psychologists' flair for concocting countless "variables" to account for behavior is another instance of molecularization. Now, whether the contemporary computer models will be able to analyze mental phenomena in terms of strings of irreducible 1s and 0s is yet to be seen.

The early behaviorists declared the study of mind to be outside of the scope of the natural sciences, because the mind cannot be objectively observed. Later, the logical behaviorists denied the existence of the mind because it militated against physicalism, which they viewed rightly or wrongly as the cardinal principle of

science. Such an application of the tenets of science ruled out the study of the mind, including the mind's trilogy. Similarly, the commitment of the scientific credo to value neutrality rules out personhood as a legitimate subject matter, since personhood, as an ethicolegal concept, demands the consideration of values. If persons are moral agents, then it is legitimate to speak of a person's character as honest or dishonest, trustworthy or otherwise. Gordon Allport, widely recognized as the founder of the study of personality, gave serious thought to the idea of including "character" as a legitimate topic for study, However, he concluded that *"Character is personality evaluated, and personality is character devalued.* Since character is an unnecessary concept for psychology, the term will not appear in this volume" (Allport, 1937, p. 52; italics original). Indeed, it is ironic that notwithstanding his deep interest in and concern for ethical issues (illustrated by his appointment at Harvard as a Professor of Social Ethics), Allport became an instrument in demoting personhood in contemporary psychology and in promoting "personality" in its place.

To summarize this section, one of the side effects of the advent of the scientific credo in North American psychology was the dissipation of the trilogy of the mind and the banishment of personhood from its boundaries. Does it then follow that the restoration of personhood should also demand the rejuvenation of the trilogy of mind? This question demands a discussion of the ontic status of the trilogy of mind.

The Ontic Status and Cross-Cultural Relevance of the Trilogy of Mind

In Western thought, what offered ontic status to the mind was Cartesian dualism. Descartes (1641/1911, Vol. 1), who tended to equate the mind with the soul, the self, or the "I," asserted that "... I am ... a real thing and really exist; but what thing? I have answered: a thing which thinks (p. 152).... What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels" (p. 153).7 Thus, Descartes included cognition, affect, and conation among the many processes that constitute the mind. Although the credit of articulating the significance of the trilogy might go legitimately to Locke, Locke borrowed Descartes's dualistic ontology notwithstanding his strong disagreements with Cartesian doctrines such as that of innate ideas.

Explicit and strong opposition to the Cartesian dualism started in Descartes' own lifetime. One of its earlier critics was Hobbes, a senior contemporary of Descartes, whose physical monist views have a considerable following to this day. However, a tacit but widespread acceptance of dualism shaped the ideas of many Enlightenment thinkers like Reid and Kant who elaborated the concept of personhood and entrenched it in Western thought. It is my impression that a more widespread and deep-seated repudiation of Cartesian ontology began in the early

decades of the 20th century with the increasing influence of the analytical philosophers and positivists of various stripes, who opposed metaphysics of all types. Within this context, Gilbert Ryle's (1949/1973) wholesale attack on the Cartesian model undermined the concept of human agency, thereby implicitly questioning the notion of personhood.

In my opinion, Ryle's objections are inextricably connected with the notions of causality in general and with the idea of mental causation in particular. Since these issues deserve more detailed treatment, I will postpone the discussion of the implications of Ryle's position to the consideration of the self-as-agent in Chapter 6. Here, let me suggest that supporting the notion of the trilogy of cognition, affect, and conation need not imply the acceptance of either Cartesian dualism or any other metaphysical doctrine. The trilogy may simply be considered to be a way of construing personhood or a way of speaking about persons. Call it a part of what Wittgenstein (1958/1967) refers to as a "language game" if you will, or think of it as a feature of the "conversational reality" as Shotter (1993) calls it. Placing it in this context avoids the conceptualization of cognition, affect, and conation as "faculties," and should also prevent their reification as well as attempts like those of the phrenologists to locate them in separate areas of the brain. If, as suggested, persons are part of the socially constructed world, then thinking, feeling, and willing could also be considered aspects of the way they are supposed to function. Again, as aspects of the functioning of persons as a whole, they need not be seen as separate entities or discrete processes, but as fully integrated features of the seamless domain of personhood.

When viewed as part of conversational reality rather than part of Nature, it is quite conceivable that the trilogy of the mind is not universal across the many distinct cultures of the world. However, the special relevance of the trilogy of cognition, affect, and conation to the present study is that this way of talking about persons is thoroughly compatible with the folk as well as classical traditions of India and the West. I am speaking here about the folk traditions first, because it is in and through folk traditions that varied conceptions of personhood flourish. Also, in my own experience of living in India and in English-speaking communities of the West, I find it equally relevant to speak of thinking, feeling, and willing. Indeed, ethicolegal implications of personhood would be impotent if they remained sequestered in classical thinking, without impinging on the folkways. As to the classical traditions, as I have indicated earlier and will try to show throughout the remainder of this volume, they are infused with the notions of persons as creatures who think, feel, and act in India as well as in the West. In this context, I wish to indicate my disapproval of the current fashion in contemporary cognitive science circles of denigrating concepts such as emotion or will as indicators of a "folk psychology," meaning primitive, unscientific ways of thinking (see Stich, 1983). After all, persons *are* the folk -individuals who would be held responsible for what they do, whether as "ordinary" men and women, or as "scientists" who

putatively know better. For the purpose of this volume, however, I have chosen to focus on classical, rather than on folk, traditions. This choice by no means suggests any disrespect on my part to folk traditions or folk wisdom, but rather is a matter of my disciplinary background, especially my lack of training in ethnographic methods essential for the study of folkways.

Having just suggested the legitimacy of cross-cultural comparisons, I now wish to enter a caveat. Although there are Sanskrit terms such as *prajña, bhava* and karma that are roughly equivalent to what we now call cognition, affect, and conation, they are not exactly equivalents[8] The relevant Sanskrit terms and their close and/or approximate equivalents will be discussed in separate chapters devoted to the self-as-knower, enjoyer/sufferer, and agent, respectively. Here I would just note an important matter of difference between Western and Indian approaches to these issues. In the Indian tradition, the focus is on the person or ego as knower *(jnātā),* enjoyer/sufferer, *(bhoktā),* and agent *(kartā).* This implies a holistic view of personhood, and psychological processes of knowing, feeling, and acting are discussed as relevant to many different contexts, as I shall try to show later. The holistic emphasis counters, corrects, and complements the fragmentation of personhood typical of contemporary Western psychology. It also helps focus on the issue of personal identity. The significance of the differences between Western and Indian approaches cannot be pointed out at this stage; they can be brought forth and discussed only after parallel currents of thought are presented to the reader. Suffice it to say that I wish to try hard not to ignore, minimize, or exaggerate the importance of either the differences or the similarities between traditions.

Self and Ego

The self and ego are more or less equivalent concepts, both pertaining to the person. While the concept of personhood refers to individuals in general, both self and ego designate a particular person in contrast with, in relation to, or as different from others. Unlike the concept of person, self and ego are dialectical concepts such that a self implies a non-self or an *other.* Ego implies an alter, just as the concept of an organism implies an entity marked off from its environment and standing in some kind of relationship with it. There is an implicit boundary between the self and the non-self, even as the organism's skin separates it from the rest of the world. However, unlike the skin of an organism, the "boundary" separating the self from the world and/or others is not objective, discrete, and concrete, but subjective, often uncertain, symbolic, and "constructed." While the person is defined differently in terms of differing rights and duties in various societies, the self is construed and defined differently from one culture, theorist, and individual to another. Indeed, the idea of self is defined differently in differing contexts in terms of a bewildering array of concepts, metaphors, and perspectives.

There have been endless controversies in the Indian as well as Western traditions on the putative existence, nature, knowledge, and value of whatever that has been called the self.

It is my understanding that the debate over the nature of selfhood is inextricably connected with the issue of what, if anything, remains the same about the individual despite great changes in virtually every aspect of his or her personhood. This is a complex issue. It arises from the common observation that most persons seem to have an unmistakable experience of having been the same persons across time and space despite having minor as well as major changes in almost every aspect of themselves. Since change is the very opposite of sameness, saying that something has changed and has yet remained the same is a *paradox.* This paradox is at the root of what is called the problem of personal identity. It has engaged some of the best minds of both the Indian and Western intellectual traditions over the millennia. Despite many ingenious solutions suggested throughout the history, none has satisfied everyone. It is my impression that disagreements regarding this problem arise first of all over the question, *"What* is the self?" In traditional Western terminology, such questions belong to ontology, the study of issues concerning the nature of reality. A second source of difficulty relates to the nature of evidence believed to be necessary in affirming statements regarding whether the putative self exists or not. In post-Enlightenment terminology, this is an issue pertaining to epistemology, or theories concerning the nature of knowledge. A third type of issue concerning personal identity is: Why should sameness matter at all? For some, as for Locke, personal identity matters in the ethicolegal sphere, since only the same person that committed the alleged crime may be punished for it, not someone else. For some others, it is a deeply existential issue; finding the correct answer to the question "who am I?" is deemed extremely important, for a wrong answer would make a person imposter - living someone else's life, as it were. The identity issue thus involves consideration of justice and value, and thus belongs to ethics or axiology as well.

The problem of identity thus concerns ontology, epistemology, and ethics, three major branches that comprise most of philosophy as it is conceived of in the Western tradition. In addition, the question, "Who am I?" is directly concerned with both–the philosophical inquiry about nature of selfhood and with practical issues concerning social and personal identity. Answers to this question have profound social and existential implications. Imagine, for instance, a person who first thought of himself as a communist, but who later converted to a free enterprise ideology and is now considered a traitor and enemy by his former comrades. Or consider a person who initially strongly thinks of herself as a Christian, lives for decades as a devout nun, and sacrifices family life and its pleasures, only to lose faith in religion in her old age. Such a person might think that her entire life has been a sheer waste. Or think of a person who for years considers that being human simply means being a blob of organic matter in three-dimensional space, but later

begins to think of himself as God's special creation, or vice versa. The problem of identity thus relates to the most profound personal and ideological dilemmas. As such, the discovery of one's true selfhood becomes a most crucial issue in life. Small wonder, then, that "know thyself" was a most important exhortation in ancient Greece. Similarly, in ancient India, the sage Yājñavalkya exhorted that the Self ought to be *the* subject to know about and mediate upon. [9] In our own times, the self continues to be an important topic of inquiry to many philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, as well countless other persons of varied backgrounds.

Notwithstanding the long history of serious inquiry into the nature of the self, in contemporary psychology many researchers think as though the self originated with William James, the founder of modem psychology in America. Although James's (1890/1983) famous chapter on the self in his *Principles of Psychology,* published in 1890, contains a detailed discussion of several prominent Enlightenment thinkers, contemporary psychologists often tend to ignore their contributions. This is of course in keeping with the prevailing "presentism," as discussed in the previous chapter. During the heyday of behaviorism, James's contributions to the study of the self and consciousness were forgotten, since self and consciousness were taboo topics. A prominent exception to the general amnesia for James's contributions was the James–Lange theory of emotions (James, 1884; Carlson & Hatfield, 1992), which defined emotions in physical terms.

In the mid-1970s, as the influence of behaviorism receded, both consciousness and the self came back to the mainstream of psychology, with an accompanying revival of interest in James. During the first half of the 20th century, important contributions to the study of the self and ego were made by Charles Horton Cooley (1902/1964), George Herbert Mead (1934, 1925/1968), and Sigmund Freud (1923/1961). Cooley and Mead's lead was followed more in sociology than in psychology, and although significant contributions to the study of the ego continued to be made in the Freudian and neo-Freudian traditions, these were largely marginalized in academic psychology in North America. Regardless of the marginalization of the self in the mainstream of modem psychology, the literature on the self continued to grow. Surveys of this growing body of literature also appeared from time to time; notable among them are those of Gordon Allport (1943), Hall and Lindzey (1957), Gordon and Gergen (1968), and Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984).

In his survey, Allport (1943) identified the following different meanings that the term ego had acquired by the time of his writing: the self as (1) a knower, (2) an object of knowledge, (3) primitive selfishness, (4) dominance drive, (5) passive organization of mental processes, (6) a "fighter for ends," (7) a behavioral system, and (8) a subjective organization of culture. About a decade later, Allport (1955) critically considered seven more concepts closely related to self and ego: the bodily sense, self-identity, ego enhancement, ego extension, rational agent, self-

image, and propriate striving. He also mentioned yet another definition of the self, suggested by P. A. Bertocci (1945), as a "knower, thinker, feeler, and doer-all in one blended unit of a sort that guarantees the continuance of all becoming" (Allport, 1955, p. 54).[10] Allport suggested his own term, called the *proprium,* meaning "all aspects of our personality that make for inward unity" (1955, p. 40). He hoped that such an inclusive definition would be sufficient to cover the broad range of phenomena referred to by a wide array of terms, and thereby stop the confusion created by the addition of an increasing number of new terms. But this term, even more than the many he surveyed, has itself fallen by the wayside, thus expanding the existing plethora rather than curtailing it. Nevertheless, with his extensive writings, his eclectic and inclusive approach, and his occasionally polemical but persuasive style, Allport helped rescue the concept from oblivion during decades of behaviorist dominance.

Hall and Lindzey's (1957) sympathetic survey of the various theories of the self in the first edition of their popular textbook of personality indicates that despite its marginalization, the self continued to inspire many psychologists of the mid-20th century. In the early 1960s, Gordon and Gergen (1968) conducted a survey of the literature on the self and published an excellent selection of articles that demonstrates the diversity and richness of conceptualization of the self in Western thought. According to their introductory essay, Gordon and Gergen selected over 40 short pieces for their anthology from a vast field of over 2000 publications in the disciplines of psychology and sociology. They identify the following as key issues and persistent dilemmas faced by scholars in this field: the self as (1) fact versus construct, (2) subject versus object, (3) structure versus process, and (4) single versus multiple. As I hope to show in forthcoming chapters, it would be fair to say that most of these issues were faced for centuries by generations of thinkers in India as well, Some two decades after the publication of Gordon and Gergen's survey of the literature, Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) published yet another survey of the literature on the self along with a critical and integrative summary. One of the interesting things that they point out is how the computer metaphor had started to seep into the literature, adding a new dimension to an already rich field of studies. In an article published in an issue of the *Journal of the Theory of Social Behaviour,* Susan Hales (1985) pointed out that many social psychologists had inadvertently rediscovered the self in the 1970s; in the same issue prominent scholars tried to analyze what was it that had been discovered and what did that discovery mean. If we add to all of this the material written on the affirmation and the denial of the self in the Upanisadic and Buddhist traditions of Asia, the literature would fill several libraries.

Against this background, it is neither necessary nor possible for me to offer yet another survey or one more attempt to identify the many meanings of the term self. Nor will I try to present a concise definition of selfhood or propose a new term like Allport's. Instead, I shall briefly summarize the seminal contributions of only

James, Cooley, Mead, and Freud, since their ideas have continued to inspire a good deal of work during the recent revival in psychological studies of selfhood, thereby dominating the current discourse on related topics. A selective summary of some of their important ideas, along with comments relevant to the topics to be discussed, should provide a backdrop against which the nearly forgotten contributions of earlier Western scholars, some selected ideas from the more recent publications, as well as some ideas of Indian origin probably less familiar to several readers may be presented and meaningfully discussed in the remainder of the volume.

William James: Self as the Current Thought in the Stream of Thoughts

In his classic account of the self, James says that

> In the widest possible sense, a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his land and horses, and yacht and bank account. (James, 1890/1983, p. 279, emphasis original)

This definition of the self is clearly very inclusive; it spans almost all major aspects of personhood. In trying to conceptually organize this broad territory, James first distinguishes between the "I" and the "Me," by which he means, respectively, the self-as-subject and the self-as-object. The latter is further subdivided into three hierarchically ordered "constituents," with the spiritual Me at the top, the social Me in the middle, and the material Me at the bottom. This conceptual framework is schematically presented in Fig. 2.1. James gives a detailed account of what is involved in these three "constituents" of the Me, and describes what actions each of them prompts and what feelings they generate.

The material Me includes the body, clothes, home, and other possessions. At this level, self-seeking is manifest in the form of the body's appetites, one's tendencies to "deck" or adorn the body, and in the tendency for acquisitiveness. The corresponding feelings are fear of poverty or starvation, and either modesty or pride and vanity regarding personal wealth and possessions. The social Me

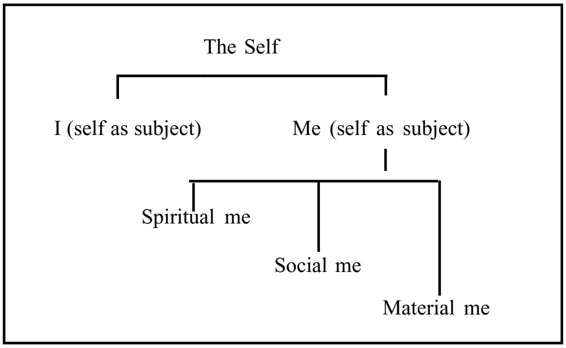

Figure 2.1. Schematic diagram of William James's concept of the self.

involves the many social roles we play; we may have as many social selves as there are groups, or even individuals, whose opinions we care about (p. 281). Our social self-seeking is manifest in our tendencies to seek company and to be noticed and admired; we may feel proud or vainglorious if appreciated by fellow beings and shameful or mortified if disapproved of and neglected. Sometimes a person's social selves are at variance with one another, like being an aggressive officer at work but a meek husband at home. As well, the social selves occasionally conflict due to differing or simultaneous demands from significant others, like having to finish tasks on one's job and do chores for the family at the same time. We usually are able to juggle the demands and resources well enough to maintain unity despite occasional role conflicts and to organize in a relatively harmonious manner a large number of varied activities for and with family, work, neighborhood, and various other groups. In regard to the third part of the empirical Me, namely the spiritual Me, self-seeking manifests in the form of intellectual, moral, or spiritual aspirations, which in turn may bring feelings of inferiority or superiority, guilt or purity. James defines the spiritual Me as "a man's *[sic]* inner or subjective being, his psychic faculties or dispositions, taken concretely; not the bare principle of personal Unity, or 'pure' Ego" (p. 283).

James's notion of the spiritual me is a subtle one. it is my observation from numerous discussions of this topic that the very word "spiritual," combined with James's expressions "psychic faculties ... taken concretely" commonly cause confusion, and many students find it difficult to distinguish the spiritual Me from the "pure Ego." Since some important issues tend to be ignored as a result of such confusion, it is necessary to add some comments and clarification. Part of the problem in understanding involves the negative connotations that certain terms such as "spiritual" and "faculties" have acquired over the years. Today the word *spiritual* connotes something ecclesiastical, religious, or supernatural, all of which are an anathema to many contemporary psychologists. Also, the concept of "faculties" first became disreputable (for it, like the concept of instinct, is a mere label that explains nothing), and then went out of vogue. What James means by "spiritual" in this context is, I think, what we currently call "mental" as opposed to physical. James's expression, "inner subjective being," suggests that his concept of the spiritual Me includes the innumerable "entities" that may have ever passed through one's mind - one's thoughts, wishes, dreams, doubts, and what have you -all taken together. Here again, James's expression "taken concretely" is confusing, for how can something as intangible as "subjective being" and as abstract as "psychic faculties" be taken concretely? I think what James wanted to suggest here is that, all entities like thoughts and dreams, and processes such as thinking and doubting, may be looked upon as the objects of one's thoughts, which are to be distinguished sharply from the "pure Ego," which is the subject who experiences the thoughts and processes. It is important to remember that the crucial distinction between the Jamesian "I" and "Me" is that the former is the self-as-

subject while the latter is self-as-object. The "I," or the so-called "pure Ego," is the "bare principle of personal unity," and as such must be distinguished from such countless mental entities as thoughts and dreams that emerge and disappear in the stream of consciousness.

The stream of consciousness is an expression made popular by William James. The metaphor of the stream may not have been an original contribution of James. He might possibly have encountered it in the work of Thomas Reid (1785/1975b), who described consciousness or operation of the mind as "flowing like the water of a river" (p. 116) about a century before James penned his chapter. It may be noted, incidentally, that a similar expression appears over a thousand years earlier in the work of Vyāsa in India, who uses the expression *mind–river (cittanadī)* in his commentary on Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (Ch. 1, aphorism 12). Like James, the Yoga system also makes a distinction between self-as-subject or the "seer" *(gṛhītṛ, draṣṭā)* on the one hand, and self-as-object or that which is "seen" *(grahaṇa dṛśya)* on the other. Since the subject–object distinction is most crucial in both Western and Indian views of the self, and since it is not always clear, it is necessary to clarify it here. To help clarify it, it would be helpful to turn to Franz Brentano (1838-1917), a contemporary of William James (1842–1910) who explained and popularized that notion.

In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint,* Brentano (1874/1973) pointed out that mental events are always characterized by "intentionality," which means that processes like thinking, recollecting, and dreaming are always directed toward something or other. In his oft-quoted statement Brentano says: "In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, and so on" (p. 88). Thus, a thought is always a thought about something, one always dreams of something, or has an attitude toward some object, and so on. The entities onto which the mental events are directed are called the "objects" of thought. James (1890/1983) used the word "Thought" (with a capital T) as a generic term to designate all types of "cognitive phenomenal events in time" (p. 349), which he also called "pulses of cognitive consciousness" (p. 322), or "conscious states." The Jamesian Thought thus includes mental events such as seeing, hearing, reasoning, recollecting, loving, and a hundred other ways in which our minds are alternately engaged (pp. 224–225). All such Thoughts are intentional in Brentano's sense. In the case of a process like seeing or hearing, the object to which they are directed may be a physical entity, such as the desk I see in front of me, or the neighbor's dog that I just heard barking. But imagining and thinking might be directed to a purely imaginary entity, like a mermaid, or the square root of minus one, for instance. The objects of Thought may be either tangible, such as a chair, or intangible, like the dream I had last night, or the idea that just passed through my mind a moment ago. Now, suppose I conceive of the entire collection of all the Thoughts that may have formed my stream of consciousness; collectively, they are the object of my current

Thought. Taken together, all my Thoughts that I can think of together constitute my spiritual Me, which is one of the constituents of the empirical Me, or the self-as-object, as distinguished from the "I," the self-as-subject in whose experience they appear.

The Jamesian pure Ego is not the spiritual Me, but the experiencing subject as opposed to the objects of experience. Husserl (1933/1977, pp. 66–67), a student of Brentano, conceived of subject and object as the two poles of consciousness, such that the pure Ego always remains unchanged as the self-identical subject-pole of intentional states of awareness, while consciousness shifts its focus from moment to moment from one object to another.[11] To understand what this means, we must stop looking outward at the world of objects "out there," so to speak and instead turn our attention inward toward the contents and processes of our own mind. James (1890/1983, p. 287) describes what happens when one turns one's attention inward: "When I try to remember or reflect, the movements in question, instead of being directed towards the periphery, seem to come from the periphery inwards and feel like a sort of withdrawal from the outer world" (emphasis original). This inner world is the territory of the stream of consciousness. As noted, taken together, the contents of the stream constitute one's spiritual Me. Although it is placed "higher" in James's hierarchy of selves than the material and social selves, it is still not the apex of selfhood; the apex is the pure Ego. Whether we dwell on the whole stream of consciousness or on specific Thoughts that inhabit there, we would still be encountering the self-as-object. To get to the pure Ego at the apex, we must move from the periphery of the territory of consciousness toward the "center of awareness," so to speak. As James puts it:

> If the stream as a whole is identified with the Self far more than the outward thing, *a certain portion of the stream abstracted from the rest* is so identified in an altogether peculiar degree, and is felt by all men as a sort of innermost center within the circle, of sanctuary within the citadel, constituted by the subjective life as a whole. (pp. 284–285; emphasis in original)

Notwithstanding such richly expressive metaphors as the "citadel" and "center within the circle" used by James, the description of the pure Ego remains enigmatic. One of the most important issues that complicates the matter is the putative *unity* of the "I," the self-as-subject. Its unity stands in sharp contrast with the obviously multifarious manifestations of the "Me": the many Thoughts, several social selves, and countless material objects with which the "I" feels now and then identified. According to James, reconciling the unity of the "I" in the face of the multiplicity of the "Me" is the "most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal" (p. 314). This puzzle may be termed the "problem of personal identity." James devotes a good portion of his chapter on the self to a discussion of this issue by presenting the positions of Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant, among others and by offering his critique of their views. We shall return to this issue in a later section of this chapter. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the distinction between

subject and object is a critical issue in the school of thought called the Advaita Vedanta, and this school and its rivals (Sāṅkhya and Yoga) offer very different perspectives on it than James's. Also, as we shall see in Chapter 3, such a distinction is implicit in the metaphor of the "center of awareness" that Erik Erikson (1968, p. 135) uses in explaining his view of personal identity.'

Before closing our account of the Jamesian view of the self, it is necessary to take a brief look at James's discussion of an interesting question: "What is loved in 'self-love'?" In this connection, James (189011983) makes an observation that "each of us is animated by a *direct feeling of regard for his own pure principle of individual existence"* (p. 303, emphasis original). Although the word "existence" makes it sound as if he were suggesting something profoundly existential, I think James is referring here to the common observation that there is a tendency in living beings toward self-preservation. It is called and explained differently in different systems. The *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali (1978, 2.3, 9),[12] for instance, speaks of "abhiniveśa," a self-preserving tendency common to all living beings. This idea is akin to the currently popular notion of a "selfish gene," which suggests a fundamental tendency of all forms of life to cling to life (Dawkins, 1989). James (1890/1983) put this very simply: "A man in whom self-seeking of any sort is largely developed is said to be selfish" (p. 302). This basic self-seeking or "selfish" tendency manifests itself variously in human beings. To put it in the Jamesian perspective, one could say that it manifests in the form of seeking food and warmth as well as in possessing and preserving wealth at the material level, in seeking reputation and dominance at the social level, and in cultivating virtues or in trying to ensure otherworldly well-being at the spiritual level. James's views in this regard are best summarized in his own words:

> To have a self that I care for, nature must first present me with some object interesting enough to make me instinctively wish to appropriate it for its own sake, and out of it manufacture one of those material, social, or spiritual selves ... (p. 304).
> *[W]e see no reason to suppose that "self-love" is primarily, or secondarily, or ever; love for one's mere principle of conscious indentity* It is always love for something which, as compared with that principle, is superficial, transient, liable to be taken up or dropped at will. (James, 1890/1983, p. 307; emphasis original)

In agreement with James, we may grant that self-seeking is based on naturally given or "instinctual" tendencies to seek food, bodily comfort, sex, company of fellow humans, and so on, and that, at the beginning of the life cycle, selfhood is defined in terms of objects to which we are naturally attracted. But obviously we are not stuck for life with the attraction for such objects; naturally attractive things such as toys, games, and even sex lose their appeal at some time or another. Another such attraction defines our "raw" selfhood, it is open to be cultivated in different ways under the impact of societal influence and individual choice. What James is suggesting here is that our adult self is "manufactured," so to speak. To put it differently, the mature self is cognitively and/or socially constructed, or

rather, "fabricated." If what is loved in ordinary human lives is mostly "superficial, transient and liable to be taken up or dropped at will," as James put it, then it should in principle be possible for us to radically alter the course of our lives if we so desire. I wish to emphasize this idea since it suggests the possibility of the empowerment of the individual in the task of self-transformation. As we shall see later, several schools of Indian thought suggest systematic ways of self-transformation by selectively dropping off many of the superficial and transient things that we come to love in our lives.

C. H. Cooley: A Closed and Nasty Self Versus an Open and Lofty Self

Following the lead of William James, Charles Horton Cooley (1902/1964) extended the conceptualization of the self to the social sphere. He emphasized the social nature of the self by noting that "There is no sense of 'I,' as in pride or shame, without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they" (p. 182). In other words, there is a basic dialectic between the *self* and the *other;* the self and the other are born together, because the very act of self-definition sets the boundaries of selfhood, thereby marking off the characteristics and territories of otherness. If I call myself a radical, have-not, atheist, or senior, then I automatically distinguish myself from, respectively, the conservatives, haves, theists, and youth as the "others" with whom I implicitly establish various kinds of relationships. At the core of the self, Cooley sees a peculiar sort of a "feeling," a feeling that turns to elation and puffs up the "ego" with praise, and to utter humiliation when the ego deflates under censure. With his famous metaphor of the "looking glass," Cooley (1902/1964, p. 184) describes how we very often tend to see our reflections in the eyes of others, even imagine what our parents, friends, competitors, or enemies think of us, and feel happy when our image appears positive and vice versa. Cooley's insightful analysis of such interpersonal or social implications of the self paved the way for important developments in social psychology and related disciplines for decades: Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison processes, which emphasizes the continual self–other comparisons that deeply affect our experience and behavior; Goffman's (1959) work on the "presentation of the self in everyday life"; and research on "impression management," i.e., social maneuvers that we engage in while trying to enhance our image in the eyes of others (Schlenker, 1980).

One aspect of Cooley's view of the self, which I think is often neglected, is his metaphor of the self as a "citadel," which he seemed to borrow from James and to develop in his own distinctive way. For Cooley, that citadel can be either closed and protected from the outside influence or is left open for a two-way expression of mutual love between the self and others. It is better to present Cooley's ideas in his own words:

> [S]elf feeling may be regarded as in a sense the antithesis, or better perhaps, the complement of that disinterseted and contemplative love that tends to obliterate the sense of divergent individuality. Love of this sort has no sense of bounds, but is what we feel when we are expanding and assimilating new and immediate experience, while self-feeling accompanies the appropriating, delimiting, and defending of a certain part of experience; the one impels us to receive life, the other to individuate it. The self, from this point of view, might be regarded as a sort of citadel of the mind, fortified without and containing selected treasures within, while love is an undivided share in the rest of the universe. In a healthy mind each contributes to the growth of the other: what we love intensely or for a long time we are likely to bring within the citadel, and to assert as part of ourself [sic]. On the other hand, it is only on the basis of a substantial self that a person is capable of progressive sympathy or love. The sickness of either is to lack the support of the other. There is no health in a mind except as it keeps expanding, taking in fresh life, feeling love and enthusiasm; and so long as it does this its self-feeling is likely to be modest and generous; since these sentiments accompany that sense of large and the superior which the love implies. But if love closes, the self contracts and hardens: the mind having nothing else to occupy its attention and give it that change and renewal it requires, busies itself more and more with self-feeling, which takes on narrow and disgusting forms, like avarice, arrogance and fatuity. (Cooley, 1902/1964, pp. 187–188)

Cooley's rich metaphors and lucid expressions drive home his point quite effectively. However, it seems to me that the moralistic and prescriptive message of his words has been relatively neglected despite the renewed popularity of his work in the 1980s, probably because it is at variance with the value-free stance that dominates the contemporary psychology's Zeitgeist. Among some of the earlier exceptions to this general trend of neglect are Gordon Allport (1954A958) and Erik Erikson (1968), and among the more recent ones I could name Edward E. Sampson (1988) and Hoshmand and Ho (1995). Let me note a few points from their work that are relevant here.

In *The Nature of Prejudice* Allport (1954/1958, pp. 43–45) notes the observations of Piaget and Weil (1951), showing that children gradually develop a sense of belonging to various social groups, and that most children never enlarge their sense of belonging beyond the family, city, and nation. Allport's comment on this observation was as follows: "While the national orbit is the largest circle of loyalty that most children learn, there is no necessity for the process to stop there" (pp. 44–45).This remark expresses his wish to see that people develop a sense of loyalty to the whole of humanity, a sentiment that runs through most of Allport's social psychological writings. In *Becoming,* Allport (1955, p. 45) connects this with his view of selfhood by coining the term *ego-extension,* a dialectical counterpart of Cooley's notion of the constricted and narrow self. The concern here is simply striving for the fullest possible expansion of the in-group that a person calls *mine.* Thinking along similar lines, Erik Erikson puts it differently. He bemoans the fact that today humanity is divided into innumerable mutually warring "pseudo-species," rather than being united into a single humankind. Like Allport, Erikson (1968) repeatedly expresses in his writings his concern and longing for a "world-

wide identity" (see, e.g., p. 42). Cooley was explicit about the lack of health in the narrow and constricted boundaries of self; he even considered narrowness and selfishness disgusting. Erikson echoes similar sentiments about those who get jingoistically stuck on the loyalty for a group, hating everyone outside.

Working within the Freudian model, the well-known studies of the authoritarian personality by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) also suggested that ethnocentrism and bigotry are indicative of a stunted or pathological ego development. Although psychologists have been successful in creating an awareness in the public at large that seeking psychiatric or psychological help in various forms of neuroses is acceptable - even respectable -they have been unsuccessful in developing a matching awareness about egotistical or totalitarian ego boundaries. We cannot even imagine someone going to a clinical psychologist to ask for help in curing his or her bigotry; for many psychologists do not seem to share Cooley's view of narrow ego boundaries as pathological. Nor have they been able to develop ways to assist individuals in expanding their ego boundaries, should someone ask for such help. At any rate, we shall consider certain aspects of the narrow closed boundaries of the self in our discussion of A. G. Greenwald's (1980) concept of the "totalitarian ego" in Chapter 4.[13]

Loyalty to humanity as a whole is, like motherhood, an ideal common to most cultures. The ancient Greek ideal of being a "citizen of the world" (cosmopolitan) is an instance of this. In the Indian tradition, an ideal person is often described as treating the whole of humanity as one's own family *(vasudhaiva kutumbakam),* and it is reflected in the description of the ideal person in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (12.13). There is some recent work in psychology that suggests that Eastern and Western cultures are different in the ways in which they promote the development of relatively more individualistic or collectivistic egos. The observations of Edward Sampson and David Ho may be mentioned in this context insofar as they are relevant to the themes under discussion.

In his paper, Sampson (1988) mentions two conclusions drawn by Heelas and Lock (1981) from their cross-cultural studies. First, that people in all cultures draw a boundary between the self and the nonself, and second, that *where* the line is commonly drawn varies extensively from culture to culture. Sampson refers in this context to the work of David Bakan (1966), who suggested that there are two mutually opposing tendencies that simultaneously coexist within each individual. The first, called *agency,* manifests itself in the isolation, alienation, and aloneness of the individual and in the urge for self-assertion, self-protection, and self-aggrandizement. The other tendency, called *communion,* manifests itself in the urge to become part of, or seek union with, something larger than the limited field of the individual. In my view, the self–nonself boundaries continually contract and expand when agency dominates communion and vice versa. According to Sampson, societies and cultures differ in terms of whether they promote a self-contained individualism with emphasis on firm and exclusive boundaries between self and

nonself, or "ensembled individualism," in which boundaries tend to be fluid and inclusive. In Sampson's view, contemporary American society promotes self-contained individualism, which tends to enhance individual freedom, responsibility, and achievement. By contrast, he says "[e]lements of Japanese, Chinese (Confucian), and Islamic indigenous psychologies offer ensembled type of individualism'' (Sampson, 1988, p. 17).

Arguing along similar lines, Hoshmand and Ho (1995) suggest that Western conceptions of the self emphasize the centrality and sovereignty of the individual, and contrast them with Eastern conceptions that emphasize relatedness instead. In the latter context, Hoshmand and Ho note the importance of relatedness in the Confucian tradition, and mention the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991), who discuss the fundamental relatedness of individuals promoted in many Asian cultures. They point out that Confucianism overemphasizes relatedness so as to stifle individual expression and creativity and it promotes authoritarian sociopolitical institutions. From reading Hoshmand and Ho's comments in this regard, it seems to me that, while self-contained individualism promotes individual initiative and achievement, it also fuels greed and uncaring families. By comparison, some Eastern cultures promote ensembled individualism, which leads to interdependence and harmony on the one hand, but stifles creativity and encourages social oppression on the other. It is possible that such East–West comparisons tend to oversimplify the complex issues of individualism and collectivism and perhaps overgeneralize from selective observations. Nevertheless, the conceptual distinctions between individualist and collectivist styles of the development of the ego and the evaluation of their relative merits make sense. Such developments in the study of the self enrich the legacy of Cooley.

G. H. Mead: The Social Construction of Selfhood

Like Cooley, Mead (1934),[14] too, emphasized the *social* aspects of the self. He affirms the priority of the society, particularly the social context in which an individual is born and socialized. It is in the process of socialization, particularly in the family, that a person acquires his or her "self-definition" in terms of one's station in life: as son of Mr. and Mrs. so and so, in terms of other kinship relationships, in terms of the race and social class to which one belongs, and so on. Mead distinguishes human society sharply from nonhuman societies by pointing out that humans use *symbols* in communicating with other members of their own species rather than only *signs* as nonhuman species do, Unlike signs, which have a fixed relationship with what they signify, symbols are open to alternative interpretations. Thus, when the mother nods her head, it might mean either a clear yes, or a "maybe," or even a mild prohibition, and the child must *interpret* what mother's underlying *intention* might be in giving the nod. Someone pointing a finger at the door may mean either shut it or open it depending on the context-

whether it is too hot or cold in the room, whether a need for privacy is suggested, and so on. During the process of growing up, human individuals acquire the ability to interpret the intentions behind the symbols communicated by others primarily by learning to take the "perspective of the other," i.e., by learning to put oneself in the other's shoes, so to speak. According to Mead, the self is defined by the process of "symbolic interaction" within the context of human communities. Meltzer (1972) summarizes Mead's view of the self in the following way: "In referring to the human being as having a self, Mead simply means that such an individual may act socially toward himself *[sic]*, just as toward others. He may praise, blame, or encourage himself.. . and so forth" (p. 8). By the same token, an individual learns to speak to him- or herself and to carry on conversations among his or her own many different selves, as it were. From the Meadian viewpoint, having such silent internal conversations is what the mind is all about.

Mead was the first one to propose a systematic model of human development. Decades later, Erik Erikson developed a more elaborate model of psychosocial development by integrating Mead's social psychological model with Freud's psychoanalytical model of psychosexual development. We shall examine Erikson's theory at length in the next chapter. Until about the mid-1960s there seemed to be little direct influence of Cooley and Mead on psychology, aside from the indirect influence through Erikson's work. However, social psychology as taught within the discipline of sociology continued to be dominated by Mead's symbolic interactionism (see Lindesmith & Strauss, 1968; Cardwell, 1971; Lauer & Handel, 1977). Of the many sociologically oriented formulations of the self, it will be useful to note some aspects of Peter Berger's (1966a) view of social identity. As noted in the previous chapter, Berger and Luckmann's (1966) view of the social construction of reality was based on the insights of Mead, Mannheim, Schutz, and Piaget, among others. Within this social constructionist framework, Peter Berger (1966a) defines social identity as follows: *"Identity, with its appropriate attachments of psychological reality, is always identity within a specific socially constructed world.* Or, as seen from the viewpoint of the individual: *One identified oneself; as one is identified by others, by being Located in a common world"* (p. 111, italics original).

Identity, as suggested here, may be seen as the "location' in a socially constructed world. Thus, when a man identifies himself as an engineer in such and such company, a member of a certain church or a particular party and so on, he is defining where he belongs, where he is situated in the worlds of work, religion, politics, and so on. Such a person may relocate himself on the social map by taking up a new job, by converting to another religion, or by changing his political affiliation, and so on. Such relocation might happen because of a conscious and deliberate choice and might be preceded and/or accompanied by a cognitive reconstruction of the person's worldview, say from Catholicism to communism and so on. Alternatively, one may get forcibly uprooted because of war or drought,

or may be involuntarily converted to a different ideology, and cognitive construction might follow in the process of relocation and redefinition of the self. The point of all this is that, from a cognitive and social constructionist point of view, selfhood may be seen as largely open to change by one's own decision and choice, although some of its aspects may be fixed and unchanging (such as one's membership in a racial community being unalterably defined by the accident of birth, for instance). The point raised here can be easily seen as being in tune with James's ideas mentioned earlier: that of "manufacturing" a social self, and of many aspects of the self being "liable to be taken up or dropped at will." This is an important issue, for it opens the door for a deliberate and planned reconstruction of selfhood guided by explicit values and goals.

The social constructionist view is beginning to have more of a following in psychology in recent years, although the inspiration often comes not from Berger and Luckmann, but from other earlier thinkers such as Giovanni Vico (1668-1744), Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). Prominent among the contemporary constructionists are Kenneth Gergen, Rom Harré, and John Shotter. Some of their work will be referred to later on where appropriate.

The Freudian Ego: Controller of Impulses and Interpreter of Meanings

Freud offers a distinctive perspective on personhood and the ego, which has spread its influence greatly on the public at large, but not so greatly on the mainstream of academic psychology in North America. Freud conceived of the ego as a differentiated region of the id, which he thought of as a reservoir of biologically endowed libidinal energy that formed the psyche from birth. In his view, the id impulses, or passions, operate according to the pleasure principle, which is blind to consequences arising from either the realities of the external world or from the ethical demands of the social world. Freud assigned the ego the task of protecting the individual from the dangers of the outside world and equipped it with reason and ability to control the body's movements. This implies that the ego accounts for cognition and conation, while the id involves all of affect. Thus, between the two of them, the ego and the id account for the trilogy of mind. There is no ambiguity in Freud's model as to the relative strengths of reason, will, and affect; the ego barely manages to keep the unruly id under control. Indeed, Freud (1923A961,p. 25) himself compared the ego to the rider of a horse of greatly superior strength with the use of borrowed forces. Freud equates the whole individual or psyche to the id, and conceives of the ego as but a differentiated portion of the id that arises for, and remains to be in the service of, the id. Freud's theory provides an elaborate account of how the ego develops through the experiences of childhood and continues to channel psychic energies in habitual ways.

According the Freud, the newborn child's psychic energies are naturally

directed to the mother, the provider of nutrition and succor. She is the child's first and foremost object of emotional investment, or *cathexis.* Focusing primarily on the male child, Freud thought that the young boy encounters the father as a rival in winning mother's attention and love, with the father becoming a prime target of his hatred, or negative cathexis. But the father is also often an indulgent provider and protector, and is too powerful and desirable to wish away. The child is thus in a quandary, insofar as he (and Freud spoke mainly, although not exclusively, of the male child) must balance the mutually opposing forces of hatred and love for the father. The little boy is said to resolve this problem, called the Oedipus complex, by identification with the father figure, and by internalizing his image as the ego-ideal and his dictates as the conscience. The ego-ideal and the conscience together are said to constitute the superego, which becomes a differentiated portion of the psyche. With the resolution of the Oedipal dilemma, then, the ego becomes a controller of forces arising from three sides: the demands of the congenital id from within, from the superego developed during childhood and lodged inside the psyche, and from the demands of reality from the outside.

The ego is said to channel the id impulses in various ways: by repressing them back into the unconscious, or by deflecting them onto desirable or harmless targets, i.e., through sublimation, projection, and other such defense mechanisms. While the ego is supposed to be on day duty, so to speak, as an "energy manager," at night it doubles as a censor, deleting all the nasty expletives threatening to barge into the civil territory of awareness and dressing up unruly thoughts in innocuous garbs if and when they manage to enter the dreams. This latter task involves meaning-making through the manipulation of symbols, and the understanding of their true meaning requires interpretation by an analyst who has been analyzed during the process of training. As noted by Ricoeur (1970), the Freudian model can be properly understood as an amalgam of the metaphor of energy exchange, following from Freud's natural science background and his Helmholtzian legacy, and the interpretive aspect derived from the exegetic, hermeneutic, and literary traditions.

Couched in the language of energy and grounded in 19th-century physiology, Freudian psychodynamics made deep inroads into the establishment of American psychiatry. However, the Freudian claims to scientific status did not find affinity with the behaviorist views of science. For behaviorists such as Skinner, the ego looked much like a homunculus, which had no place in science. The fact that in *Ego and the Id,* Freud (1923/1961) himself referred to the ego as the "cortical homunculus" (p. 26) simply made the matter worse. Against this background, Freudian psychology became marginalized within the behavioristically dominated academic psychology in North America. Several neo-Freudian models, however, are making an impact, the object-relations perspective being most prominent among them (Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1965). In my view, accounting for the investment of *affect* is the greatest strength of such models. To the extent that object-relations psychology focuses on the investment of affect onto self-objects,

it may be considered a legacy of the energetics aspect of the Freudian model. It is often said to use a plumbing metaphor; it is as if what one experiences depends on what the ego lets out from or pushes back into the reservoir of the id — or what leaks out regardless. The legacy of the interpretive aspect survives in the form of the metaphor of the text and is supported by allies in the growing popularity of hermeneutics.

In the previous chapter, the hermeneutic or interpretive implications of Freudian psychoanalysis were noted in connection with the work of Ricoeur, Lesche, and other authors. While Carl Lesche (1985) points out the importance of the interpretation of the meaning of contents of dreams and the like in the analysand's self-understanding, David Bakan (1958) emphasizes the importance of the interpretation of symbols. In *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (1958), Bakan argues that Freud's approach to dream interpretation was analogous to and followed from the techniques for deciphering the symbolic meanings conveyed by the words of the scripture (the Torah), which were developed in the mystical tradition of the Kabbala. Without going into the validity of Bakan's claims, it may be noted that Freud's interpretive techniques were aimed not at understanding the scriptures, but at the analysand's self-understanding with the help of a trained analyst. Given the focus in the present volume on self-understanding, I would like to note interesting parallels and differences between the hermeneutic approaches of psychoanalysis and Advaita Vedanta. As we shall note in the following chapter, the Advaitists also use interpretive techniques in self-understanding. However, unlike the Freudian approach the Advaita asks interested persons to focus directly on the "scriptural" texts - the Upanisads- to help discriminate the transcendental Self beyond her or his ego *(ahaṁkāra)* which is wrapped up in ongoing thoughts and emotions. Also, while the Kabbalistic mysticism focused on symbolic meanings hidden in the subtext, the Advaitic mysticism tries to help attain the direct experience of the self-as-subject in an altered state of consciousness. To help understand such parallels and differences, it is necessary to clarify the differing meanings of the terms self and ego and the varied conceptions of self-understanding associated with them.

The Many Meanings of, and Many Perspectives on, the Self and Ego

The views of self presented above are just a few of a bewildering array of differing definitions and diverse perspectives that populate the vast literature on the self. In addition to these conceptions of the self and ego there is a long list of hyphenated terms used by psychologists, all including the term self or ego in them: self-esteem, self-image, self-actualization, self-realization, self-identity, ego-enhancement, ego-identity, and so on. There are countless publications on the concept of self-esteem alone. Psychologists have devised numerous methods for their empirical investigation (Wylie, 1974/1979). Regardless of the differences

among them, the myriad concepts of or about the self and ego all pertain to the domain of the person. Some, such as James's, cover the whole of the person; others, such as Cooley's and Freud's, indicate a differentiated part of region of personhood. While some, such as Mead, place the self squarely in the interpersonal space, others, such as Freud, examine the ego primarily within the intrapersonal sphere. There is a good deal of difference among the different conception of the self in terms of their relative emphasis on one or another aspect of the trilogy of mind. Sometimes the term *self* refers to one of the many Jamesian selves, or a temporary phase of it, while at other times the same term is used to designate something perpetual that unites the many changing aspects of personhood of selves into a Self-or the "Self of selves," as James called it.

There are differing reactions to the varied conceptions of the self and the widely differing usage of the same term that often means something very different when used within specific theoretical frameworks or in different contexts. Some find this cacophony confusing and write the self off in desperation. Others gather in distinct groups, such as the Meadian scholars and the ego-psychoanalysts, adding to psychology's disunity. Some ambitious ones like Gordon Allport try to propose new terms with the hope of developing common understanding. But meanings cannot be legislated, and new perspectives keep on emerging, and scholars use the same old terms with different definitions or to add a twist to the argument. Often in conversations where persons steeped in differing approaches get together, misunderstandings occur, and sometimes scholars keep talking past one another. What to do to avoid misunderstandings and talking past one another? I do not think there is a quick fix. What I would prefer to do is to specify whenever appropriate whether the self is being used in a Jamesian, Meadian, or a Jungian sense, so as to try avoid certain common confusions.

Before closing this section, I would like to return for a moment to the definition of the self as "knower, thinker, feeler, and doer -all in one blended unit of a sort that guarantees the continuance of all becoming," which, as noted earlier, Gordon Allport (1955) attributed to P.A. Bertocci (1945). This definition stands out against definitions that emphasize only the affective or the cognitive or some other specific aspect of personhood. It tries to cover most of the territory of personhood, unlike many others that focus on some part or other of the whole person. Interestingly, this definition of the self is an almost exact translation of the Upsanisadic view of the person as one who knows, feels, and acts *(jñātā, bhoktā, kartā).* Given the centuries and continents that separate Bertocci and Allport from the ancient Indian Upanisads, the similarity between them is very remarkable. Indeed, I find it strong and promising enough to serve as a conceptual bridge between the psychologies of India and the West, and this volume is an attempt to build such a bridge. Regardless of such confidence in the degree of similarity between these definitions of selfhood, I wish to point out an important difference between Bertocci's and the Advaita Vedantic views of personhood and selfhood.

As Bertocci indicates, his emphasis is on portraying the self as something that blends varied and continually changing thoughts, feelings, and actions into a unit of a sort that ensures continuance and Becoming, i.e., continual changes in personhood. By sharp contrast, the Advaita Vedantists suggest that cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects of personhood cannot adequately account for the unity in the multiplicity of selves or for the sameness underlying the changes. They postulate a transcendental Self to account for the Being behind the Becoming, a center of experience beyond the person as one who knows, feels, and acts (Paranjpe, 1987). This issue of what accounts for the unity in multiplicity and for sameness despite change in persons is widely known as the problem of identity, to which we now turn.

Identity

Persons are not static entities. As biological organisms persons must grow and adapt to a continually changing environment. The bodily Me matures over years, grows into adulthood, deteriorates in old age, and eventually stops functioning. There are corresponding psychological changes. For instance, cognitive capacities and various urges get stronger with bodily growth, use, and socialization, bringing ever new horizons, new hopes, and fears. As social beings we must adapt to the constantly evolving social organizations and their norms that undergo historical changes. As such, the Jamesian social Me must evolve as well; new roles are added, ways of playing them are reviewed, new friendships develop, some old ones deteriorate, and so on. The Jamesian spiritual Me undergoes corresponding changes as well. Over the decades, a lot of changes take place, and it is difficult to find a single aspect of the person that remains the same. There are of course factors that bring stability in the sea of change: career and marriage, lasting friendships, commitment to an ideology and core values - all of these tend to provide stability as well as meaning to many lives. Nonetheless, none of these factors can be guaranteed to last forever and provide an unbreakable backbone for selfsameness. Some of the most intimate relationships sour after decades; friends leave; spouses drift, divorce, or die; careers are threatened by economic and technological changes; some persons undergo religious or ideological conversions; and sometimes situations arise where one's most highly cherished values have to be abandoned. In some instances, inner or outer changes arising from illnesses, unemployment, natural disasters, social revolutions, and the like are so strong as to threaten or even break the strongest and the most stable of selves. In many societies around the world today, an increasing number of marriages end up in divorce, and radical technological change and economic globalization have made the idea of lifelong careers a thing of the past. Indeed, *what,* if anything, remains the *same* in face of diverse and major changes through the life cycle is a vexing question that has not yet been answered to everyone's satisfaction.

Yet, on the other hand, most people have an unmistakable sense of having been the same persons throughout their lives. This is probably as true in today's rapidly changing world as it was in putatively stable times of the past. Today's old man would probably be as convinced of being the same little boy he was 70 years ago as William James was in his old age a century ago. Most of us, for the most part, are able to develop and maintain a sense of continuity and sameness throughout our lives, despite various types of discontinuities and deep and diverse changes through decades of the life cycle. There are of course some exceptions to this general rule; there are occasional cases of amnesic fugue where people forget who they are and might even start a new life as someone else, but such cases are very rare (Ables & Schilder, 1935; Crabtree, 1985, pp. 36–38; Braude, 1995).

At any rate, to say that a person, or anything, for that matter, has changed and yet remained the same is a *paradox,* for sameness and change are opposites of each other, and two opposite statements cannot be true at the same time. This conundrum has been called the "paradox of identity," and a whole set of issues connected with it has been labeled the "problem of identity." William James (1890/1983) was convinced that personal identity had been "justly regarded as the most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal" (p. 314). He devoted a significant portion of his chapter on the self to discuss the various solutions suggested from Descartes onward to help solve this puzzle. After critically reviewing the positions of major Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinkers on the problem of identity, William James thought that the problem was "metaphysical," and left it to the philosophers to deal with. During the century that has since passed, psychologists have followed James's advice and have stopped being bothered by the problem of identity. Erik Erikson is a prominent exception to the psychologists' apathy in this regard. In the meantime, some philosophers have continued to struggle with the problem, but a wide gap has developed between the philosophical and psychological perspectives on identity. In Chapter 3, I shall present an outline of Erik Erikson's perspective on identity. Here, I wish to discuss some historical developments in thinking about identity, since despite their relevance to psychology, they are generally missed because of contemporary psychologists' divorce from both history and philosophy. During the course of this discussion, I wish to clarify certain issues that are in my view necessary to help make the connection with the typical Indian approaches to the problem of identity.

Perspectives on the Problem of Identity: Historical Background

When John Locke articulated the concept of person, he made it quite clear that the issue of personal identity was inextricably connected with the notion of personhood. This connection follows directly from the forensic implications of the notion of personhood, for in the judicial context, it is imperative for the court to ensure that the person being accused, convicted, and sentenced is the same as the one whom reliable witnesses saw committing the alleged crime, and not someone

else. A mistaken identity would certainly mean a miscarriage of justice. Our conception of justice is founded on the assumption that one and the same person resides in a body throughout the life cycle. There would obviously be a problem if many different personalities were to be in charge of a body at different times, as it seems to happen in the rare but not too uncommon cases of multiple personality. Assuming that Dr. Jekyll commits a crime and is imprisoned, it would not be fair to keep his body in prison when Mr. Hyde is in charge of it. Locke (1690/1959) probably did not know about multiple personalities, but he discussed its implications by imagining that it would be "possible for the same man to have distinct incommunicable consciousness at different times" (Vol. 1, p. 461).

Locke also recognized that continued existence of the same person in the same body was a precondition for a just ascription of rights and duties, and that a complete change in personhood would pose a problem. He raised this issue by means of a parable in which a prince's soul enters a cobbler's body (1690/1959, Vol. 1, p. 457). This parable presents a purely imaginary scenario, but what was purely imaginary in Locke's time has become fairly plausible owing to advances in medical technology. A few years prior to Dr. Christian Barnard's first successful heart transplant in 1967, the philosopher Sydney Shoemaker (1963) imagined a scenario in which two persons' brains are surgically transposed. The purpose of this thought experiment is to discuss the problem of personal identity following the lead of Locke's parable of the prince and the cobbler. Imagine that such a transplant succeeds and A's brain survives with his memories in B's body, but A's body dies. In this scenario, problems are bound to arise in regard to who is dead and who is alive, and it will be difficult to decide whose insurer would have to pay for the settlement of claims and whose survivors would be the beneficiaries. For the time being let us set aside the suggested solutions to this complicated issue and simply note that the problem of identity is inevitably and inextricably connected with the issue of ownership, privileges, and liabilities of persons.

Although Locke was arguably the first one in the history of Western thought to articulate the connection between the idea of personhood and the problem of identity, he was not the first one to either recognize the connection between them or to suggest a solution. A case in point is Descartes's notion of the soul as an indivisible substance that survives the body's death. Although the idea of the survival of the soul till the Day of Judgment was prompted by Descartes's Catholic background, for him it was not simply a theological baggage to carry. For Descartes, as for many others, it was important to think that justice must ultimately be done. Since the body is clearly perishable, and since many persons do not get what is rightfully due them during their lifetime, it seemed necessary for Descartes to postulate that the soul, which putatively enjoys and suffers as a consequence of its good and bad deeds, must be assumed to survive until the day when God would set the record straight for every soul that ever lived. Like Descartes, Locke too was interested to see that justice is done, but as a practical man concerned with civic matters in a world tormented by religious dogma, Locke was concerned more with

justice here on earth than in the other world. Descartes, following the traditional distinction between the notions of *substance* and *attribute,* viewed thoughts as continually changing attributes that inhere or reside in an unchanging substrate or a substance called the soul. The idea here is that the soul-substance remains the same while thoughts change, just as the substance we call water remains unchanged despite changing from a fluid to a gaseous vapor or solid ice. Locke rejected the Cartesian explanation of personal identity in terms of the identity of substance, and preferred to account for it in terms of the identity of consciousness and in the mind's capacity to retain impressions of past events in memory.

During the course of the history of Western thought, both the Cartesian and Lockean ways of accounting for personal identity have been challenged and rejected by many thinkers. The Cartesian doctrine of two different kinds of substances was criticized by Hobbes in his own time, and it has been in an endless controversy ever since. William James has offered by far the most devastating criticism of Descartes's substantialist solution to the problem of identity. James pointed out the "merely verbal character" (1890/1983, p. 329) of the notion or substance, for the Cartesian notion of the soul is nothing more than a mere label attached to what can never be verified by direct observation or any other means. A definitive critique of Locke's view of memories as the basis for personal identity was suggested early in the 18th century by Joseph Butler (1736/1975), who pointed out that "consciousness of identity *presupposes,* and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity" (p. 100, emphasis added). The argument here is that it is implicit in the very notion we call remembering that a certain idea occurs again to the *same* person who had experienced it sometime before. What Butler was pointing out was the logical priority of the notion of identity over that of memory. It is interesting to note in this connection that some Indian thinkers were clearly aware of the logical priority of personal identity over the notion of memory centuries prior to Butler. For instance, Bādarāyaṇa, who composed his Vedānta aphorisms[15] probably in the second century of the Common Era, counters the Buddhist thesis of the momentariness of selfhood by suggesting that the fact that we remember *proves* the nonmomentariness, or continued existence, of the Self.

It is my impression that after Locke, Western thinking about personal identity developed in different directions; two rather distinct approaches are illustrated in the ideas of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) and David Hume (1711–1776). Reid (1785/1975b) rejected Locke's notion that personal identity is explained by the identity of consciousness. His argument was that insofar as

> [c]onsciousness, and every kind of thought, are transient and momentary, and have no continued existence, it would certainly follow, that no man is the same person two moments of his life; and as the right and justice of reward and punishment are founded on personal identity, no man could be responsible for his actions. (pp. 116–117)

Such an amoral conclusion was unacceptable to Reid. "If you ask a definition of identity, I confess I can give none," said Reid (1785/1975a), "it is too simple a

notion to admit of such a definition" (p. 108). Like Butler, who had said earlier that the idea of personal identity is *presupposed* in the concept of memory, Reid said that "... personal identity ... *implies* the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself" (p. 109; emphasis altered).

Reid's idea that personal identity is a simple notion that cannot be further explained, but must be presupposed, is echoed in recent times in the work of the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and P. E Strawson. Wittgenstein's main point was that in the ordinary language, the word *person* and such expressions as the *same person* are used to refer to most people who have continuous memories of past events rather than, say, memories of only odd days on odd days and of even days on even days. If we did meet people with split personalities who alternate on even and odd days, we would perhaps devise expressions to suit such cases, but we do not. To put it differently, continuity and selfsameness in persons is common enough, so we can take it for granted (see Wittgenstein, 1958, pp. 61–62).In trying to explain the notions of the pure ego, person, and personal identity, Strawson (1959/1963) uses the expressions "logically primitive" (p. 98) and "logically prior" (p. 99). Strawson seems to use the term "primitive" in the Wittgensteinian sense. According to Wittgenstein (1945-1948/1970), a "primitive" concept is *prelinguistic* in the sense that "a language game is based *on it,* that it is the prototype way of thinking and not the result of thought" (p. 95e; emphasis original). Looked at in this sense, we need not *explain* the concept of identity in terms of the sameness of substance, composition, nature, properties, essence, or in other such ways; the problem of identity is not a genuine problem; it is a pseudoproblem arising from the language game we have invented. This way of dealing with the problem of identity is a classic instance of the Wittgensteinian way of "dissolving" a problem by showing that the so-called problem is an artifact of linguistic usage. In my view, although it is reasonable to accept that selfsameness in persons is *assumed,* it cannot be dismissed as a pseudoproblem, for, as I hope to show later on, the questions like "What remains same in me?" or "What can I afford to change in my self?" raise profoundly *existential* issues that cannot be ignored as minor irritants arising from imperfections of language.

Writing decades before Reid, Hume approached the issue of personal identity quite differently. Instead of taking it as a presupposition necessary to understand phenomena such as memory, as Butler had suggested before him, Hume tried to tackle the problem of identity in a couple of different ways: first, by trying to explain it with the use of an analogy of the identity of a ship, and second, by looking for empirical evidence for the self's continued existence. Let us examine these Humean approaches. Regarding explanation by analogy, Hume (1739/1978) said: "A ship, of which a considerable part has been chang'd by frequent reparations, is still considered as the same"; similarly, an "infant becomes a man, and is sometimes fat, and sometimes lean, without any change in his identity" (p. 257). What is implied here is that, according to Hume, what we *mean* when we refer to

"a ship" is a vessel to carry one across a river or a lake; the essence of a ship lies in its function, not in the parts that make this function possible. Since the changes of parts do not affect the continuation of this function and its usefulness to us, the changes can be safely ignored. By analogy, the change in the weight, organs, or physical composition of the body or change in the contents of the mind do not matter. But such reasoning does not adequately answer what is of essence in persons, nor does it tell us what, if anything, remains unchanged in persons. Hume's other strategy to help solve the problem of identity is to actually peep into the mind and see if there is something in it (perhaps the so-called self) that remains the same. After searching for a self in his own mind, Hume found nothing that remained unchanged, and declared that no such thing as the self existed. Hume's denial of the self had many deep implications that invited a strong, dialectical response from Kant. The dialectics of the Humean denial of the self and Kant's affirmation of the same is an important chapter of Enlightenment thought that is particularly relevant for the present discussion for two reasons: First, as I will try to show, the Humean denial and the Kantian affirmation of the self and identity are two radically different approaches that are not mere historical curiosities, but have followers in contemporary psychology. Second, their mutual opposition is paralleled by the Buddhist denial and the Upanisadic affirmation of the self. As such, the Humean and Kantian views deserve to be discussed in some detail. But before turning to such a discussion, it would be useful to explain different and often mutually contradictory meanings that the terms self and identify have acquired over the years, so it will be easier to understand what is being affirmed and what is being rejected in the name of a self.

The Different Meanings of the Terms *Self* and *Identity*

We have already surveyed the different ways in which the terms *self* and *ego* have been defined by major 20th-century thinkers such as James, Mead, Cooley, and Freud. Following James's notion of the self, with a lower case "s," the term *self* is sometimes used to designate one of the many "selves," such as bodily self or one's occupation self, and so on. Sometimes, however, the term *self* is understood as the Jamesian Self, with a capital "S," meaning something that accounts for a unity of the many social roles we play, or an abiding selfsameness underlying our changing roles and social identities. Ironically, one comes across a similar mutually contradictory usage of the term *identify.* While in common language we use expressions such as one's national or professional identity, which imply the many different and changeable self-definitions, we also use the term *identify* to designate personal identity, the principle that ostensibly accounts for the unity and sameness of a person across time and space. In teaching undergraduate classes in North America, I have often heard students complaining about the confusion caused by such ambiguous usage of the terms. There is no simple solution to this problem:

people not only tend to misunderstand words, they are also free to redefine terms as they see fit. Again, we need to remember that meanings of lexical items cannot be legislated; lexicographers simply describe the terms as commonly used, often adding new definitions to the already existing repertoire as new usages become established. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) lists many different meanings of the term *identity* that are currently in vogue. Of these, I would like to point out the following three, since they refer to different aspects of the problem of identity:

1. The quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness.
2. The condition or fact that a person or a thing is itself and not something else.
3. The condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc.

The *first* set of meanings clearly refers to the philosophical implications of the problem of identity. It involves the concepts of substance, essence, and others, which several philosophers have discussed in detail over the centuries. In the foregoing discussion we have seen how Descartes proposed the concept of mental substance as a way of solving the problem of identity, and we also noted James's criticism of the substantialist position. I will return to some of the implications of the Cartesian dualism later on in connection with the concepts of self-as-agent and other relevant points. I also will discuss the conceptions of identity as absolute sameness and oneness in the context of the Kantian and Advaita Vedantic approaches to the problem of identity. As I will attempt to show, the meaning of identity as absolute sameness and unity does not imply some arcane and obtuse issue fit for the arid zone of logical acrobatics and linguistic hairsplitting, but refers instead to some deeply existential aspects of the problem of identity.

The *second* meaning of identity, namely, "the condition or fact that a person or a thing is itself and not something else," is at the heart of the forensic conception of personhood. In the forensic or judicial context, such as a police lineup or in giving testimony in a court, witnesses help establish the identity of the accused by *confirming* that the accused person is the same as the one who was witnessed while committing the alleged offense and not someone else. There are a number of factors leading to unreliable testimony: inaccuracies in perception and memory, confusion arising from similarities between the accused and others at the scene of the crime or in the police lineup, the witness's conscious or unconscious desire to see or project the accused in a positive or negative light, and so on. Psychologists are often called on to testify in court proceedings as experts on such psychological matters as inaccuracies in perception, memory, and so on. But generally we do not hear of any philosopher's being asked to testify on matters of logic or being consulted on the validity of the essentialist or other definitions of the concept of identity, and so on, because the *concept* of identity is hardly ever questioned.

Nobody thinks that the criminal may have suddenly metamorphosed into someone else; the identities (in the sense of the continued existence) of the accused, witnesses, prosecutors, as well as defense lawyers and expert witnesses are *presumed.* In the usual affairs of daily life, the continued existence and selfsameness of persons are taken for granted, or are *axiomatic;* it does not need or deserve philosophic analysis or contemplation. It is in this Wittgensteinian "primitive" sense of the word that the term *identity* is used in reference to a variety of identity papers such as the driver's license, passport, library card, or various other types of "photo ID." The purpose of such papers is to establish the presenter's ownership of a certain piece of property, his or her eligibility to drive a car, or the right to cross an international border, or the privilege to borrow a book, and so on. In other words, the meaning of the term *identity* in the variety of papers involves a variety of civic rights and privileges associated with personhood. Erikson has coined the term "paper identity" to refer to this meaning of identity.

The third meaning of identity, as "the condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc.," is rare according to the OED. But in my view, this usage is quite common, particularly in psychology. This meaning is implied, for instance, when someone speaks of one's "Canadian identity" or "my identity as professor." Such usage suggests that the speaker feels identified with a certain nationality, vocation, or other aspect of her or his social existence. When we are asked, "Who are you?" the answers we tend to give are different depending on the situation and the context. Thus, if asked "Who are you?" in a college, a person might say "I am a professor," but in his son's school he would say I am Bobby's father; in a hobby shop, "I am a stamp collector"; and in a psychology discussion group, the correct answer might be "I am an extrovert." In such matters, a person's so-called identity is clearly *changeable* from one situation to another. Moreover, our identifications with social roles, hobbies, personal traits, and such are changeable through the course of life history. It is not uncommon for people to change their nationality, ideology, vocation, close friends, spouse, family, lifestyle, and so on without ever doubting that they are one and the same self they have always been. In general, the term *identity* is often used in a social context to designate that with which a person identifies him- or herself in particular situations during given periods of time—a group membership, an ideology, a religion, or with some "location" on the social map, to put it in the words of Peter Berger (1966a). As we shall see in the next chapter, Erikson deals with identity primarily in this sense, and calls it the *psychosocial* identity of persons.

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that the term *identity* is used to refer to widely varied meanings, all associated with different aspects of personhood. The central issue is concerned with reconciling of the polarities of unity *versus* diversity, and sameness *versus* change in regard to personhood. In the West, as in the Indian tradition, the question of what if anything remains the same in personhood has been tied closely with the concept of self, insofar as self was

often the term used to refer to the principle of unity and sameness in persons. Before we turn to the discussion of these issues, we may ask: Why should anyone bother with this set of problems? To whom and how would they matter?

The Problem of Identity: How Does It Matter?

The most common usage of the term *identity* that we come across almost daily is in regard to identity papers. As noted, the purpose of identity papers is to certify and thereby protect a person's rights or privileges of one sort or another. Given that in such matters, it is assumed that every person continue to be one and the same person, the questions of what if anything remains unchanged in them seems irrelevant. If so, why should anyone worry about what remains the same in persons?

Indeed, most people, for the most part, are not bothered about what accounts for their continued sameness or identity. That most people can afford to ignore the problem of identity does not mean either that it is solved or that it has been ignored. It has indeed proved to be one of the most puzzling puzzles of all times, and personal identity continues to be a very active area of research in contemporary philosophy (see Vesey, 1974; Rorty, 1976; Hirsch, 1982; Shoemaker & Swinburne, 1984; Noonan, 1989; Harris, 1995). In keeping with the analytical approach typical of modern Anglo-American philosophy, numerous contemporary philosophers have been engaged in solving the problem of identity using the logical analysis of complex, usually imaginary, scenarios. As noted in the previous chapter, many contemporary philosophers have concocted a variety of imaginary situations involving brain bisection and transplants to help address various aspects of the puzzle of personal identity (see, for example, papers by Bernard Williams, Derek Parfit, and Thomas Nagel, in Perry, 1975). Although the imaginary scenarios might help throw some light on logical and ethical issues associated with the problem of identity, Wilkes (1988) is perhaps right in suggesting that on the whole they divert attention from problems of "real people." But if most "real" people can and do happily go about their daily life as if the problem did not even exist, for whom and in what way is the problem of identity relevant and important?

Personal identity is a nonissue as long as things keep moving smoothly in an average expectable environment, but it has the potential to be problematic for almost everybody under certain circumstances. It is somewhat like the transportation system that is taken for granted as long as it works smoothly, but becomes a huge problem in case of an accident, a workers' strike, or other such situations. Although very few people split into multiple personalities, all of us must play multiple roles every day and keep the multiple selves united into a single whole, and occasionally face role conflicts that have a potential to split us apart. Nobody can stop changing; all of us must cope with change and maintain a sense of selfsameness. All of us risk a breakdown, as some individuals do in the face of

sudden and radical shifts in the environment during calamitous crises. In general, the degree of difficulty in the development and maintenance of unity and sameness increases in proportion to the range or diversity of internal differentiation and the degree and rate of change that an individual faces. Coping with inner diversity and change is a matter appropriate for psychological study, even as trying to solve the paradox of identity is a task fit for philosophical inquiry.

Erik Erikson's essay, "The Problem of Ego-Identity," first published in 1956, is an important landmark in the psychological study of the problem of identity. We will look closely at Erikson's views on this matter in the next chapter. What makes it psychological is that it deals with the various internal and societal factors that induce changes in persons through the life cycle and their trials and tribulations in coping with the changes and in developing and maintaining a sense of selfsameness in face of the changes. According to Erikson, "identity crises," i.e., periods in which some individuals experience difficulties in the development and maintenance of a sense of selfsameness, occur predominantly during late adolescence and early adulthood. This should not be surprising against the foregoing discussion, because adolescence is a period marked by major and rapid internal changes induced by puberty, which also coincides with major changes demanded by social expectations of transition from childhood to adulthood. Rapid and major historical and social changes add to the biologically induced difficulties of transition to adulthood and exacerbate a youth's difficulties in maintaining a sense of selfsameness. Also, complex societies that offer their youth opportunities to choose from a much wider variety of occupations, ideologies, and lifestyles than less complex societies do, thereby make it more difficult to find a suitable place in society and to integrate the diverse roles and ideals into a meaningful and unified sense of self. Given the increased rate of social and technological change and increasing acculturation of diverse cultures in the process of globalization, an increasing number of people are facing greater difficulties in developing a sense of identity than ever before. It is possible that the sociocultural climate in the so-called postmodern era might alleviate the situation somewhat by tempering expectations of consistency and stability from individuals. These types of issues are just beginning to be raised; they are among the challenges that contemporary researchers must face in the near future.

It is necessary to clarify a simple but important implication of identity in the sense that it implies "the condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc.," to something or other. If one adopts a strictly determinist position, one assumes that what a person identifies with is determined by factors beyond individual control, whether the factors be of social, biological, environmental, or psychological nature. We shall discuss the issue of freedom versus determinism in Chapter 6. Assuming for a moment that individuals *can* choose among at least a small range of alternative persons, groups, ideals, and ideologies with which to identify, the choice matters a lot. Choosing to be a dancer rather than a geologist, a Catholic and

not a Communist, nor a provincialist as opposed to an internationalist makes consideable difference to not only the identity of the chooser, but also to others. Identification of the individual with other persons, groups, ideas, ideals, and so on is a matter of investing one's affect, of love, concern, indifference, or hatred. Here we may remember William James's idea quoted earlier in this chapter that love, whether self-love or love for objects, is "liable to be taken up or dropped at will." Moreover, as several schools of Indian thought suggest, it is possible for individuals to intensify the investment of affect in objects of love if they choose and/or to cultivate affective neutrality. We will discuss the strategies suggested for such modification of affect in Chapter 5. If indeed such strategies are effective, it may be possible for persons to modify their psychosocial identities to a great extent.

Finally, "Who am I?" is the most significant issue, with profound existential implications for a person. In principle, there may be an unlimited variety of ways in which one could construe, define, and shape one's own self; at one extreme one could commit suicide or hurt oneself in a variety of ways, and at the other extremes one could work toward some form or other of gratification, fulfillment, self-actualization, self-realization, liberation, or some such ideal. Moreover, one could conceivably choose between changing oneself toward some form of betterment or trying to discover some unchangeable state. In the history of the Western tradition, Heraclitus and Parminides are known to have offered two rival models, the first advocating perpetual change while the latter preferred stasis of changelessness. Similarly, in the Indian tradition, Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta offered alternative models, one emphasizing Becoming or change and the other Being and permanence. It will be useful to explore these alternatives and see how they view the problem of identity.

The Denial and Affirmation of the Self in India and the West

I have discussed this issue elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1995b, in press) at greater length. Here, I am restricting the discussion to fit the scope of this chapter. To that end, I shall first focus on the denial and affirmation of the self by Hume and Kant, respectively. After outlining their contrasting positions, I will try to show how their approaches are echoed in contemporay psychology in the views of Skinner and Erikson, respectively. Although neither Skinner nor Erikson explicitly discuss their views in light of Humean or Kantian positions, they seem nevertheless to be selectively influenced by these intellectual forebears. Following this discussion, I wish to compare the Hume –Kant dialectic with that of Buddhism – Vedanta. To help clarify the issues involved in comparing such contrasting views across the cultural gaps that stand between them, it is necessary to sharpen the questions one might ask in this context. The questions may be framed as follows:

1. *What* is it that is either affirmed or denied in the name of the self?
2. What are the *grounds* on which the validity of propositions is claimed?
3. What are the *interests, values,* and *goals* that may have guided a given inquiry in a certain direction, and what are the practical *consequences* that follow from their respective conclusions?

It should be easy to see that these questions follow the typical trilogy of ontology, epistemology, and axiology common in Western philosophy. Although such a tripartite division is not common in Indian thought, I think it is not unreasonable to apply it to the Indian context.

The Historical Origins of the Dialectics of the Self in Western Thought

St. Augustine's quip, "For if I am deceived, so I am," is arguably one of the oldest statements affirming the existence of the self in Western thought. It was sometime during the early 5th century CE that St. Augustine said this, in his *City of God* (1950, xi, 26, p. 370), in response to the Academicians, i.e., Plato's followers of his time, who were challenging him about the validity of his claims to the existence of a soul or the self. Augustine's defense against their doubts was that no doubts could ever be expressed unless there exists a doubter in the first place. In the 17th century, Descartes invoked the same line of argument in defense of the self while combating his own radical doubt against assumptions of all kinds. Descartes's famous words, "I think, therefore I am," are recognized as a sign of his "rationalist" approach, since the grounds of this affirmation reside in the implicit argument that if we admit that thinking of some sort is going on, then it is absurd to deny the existence of the thinker.

During Europe's Age of Enlightenment, Descartes's views provided the background for the debates over a number of issues between the Continental Rationalists such as Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant, on the one hand, and the British Empiricists such as Bacon, Locke, and Hume, on the other. The basic bone of contention during the course of these debates was the origin, nature, and validation of *knowledge.* As to the nature of the existence of the self, David Hume emerged as the strongest nay-sayer, instigating an equally strong response from Immanuel Kant. To understand the grounds of Hume's rejection of the self, we need to look into the principles of the empiricist epistemology handed down by his intellectual forebears, Bacon and Locke. As noted in the previous chapter, these include the metaphor of the mind as a mirror and the notion of knowledge as primarily an image of an object in this mirror. It may be recalled that Hume found no support for the concept of cause for want of any mental images of what might be seen as "causes" in the real world. Hume's conclusions in this matter undermined the

faith in Newtonian science, which was about to become the cornerstone of Western thought. The impact of Hume's skepticism went much farther than shaking up the foundations of natural science; it undermined ethics as well, since, if causality and necessity are denied, intentions could not be guaranteed to bring about relevant actions anymore than natural causes could be counted on to bring about relevant effects. And where would intentions emanate from except the mind, and who would prompt them other than the self? Given his tacit acceptance of the Cartesian dualism, Hume expected the self to be ensconced somewhere in the mind rather than *out* there in the world. But given his commitment to empiricism, Hume could validate the existence of the self on the basis of some kind of an experience of it, and not on the basis of an argument like the one Descartes had suggested. Against this background, Hume, a tireless inquirer, set out to "look" for a self in the contents of his own mind.

HUME'S DENIAL OF THE SELF

The results of Hume's introspective explorations are well known; he affirmed not only for himself but for "the rest of mankind" that the mind was "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions" (1739/1978, p. 252); there is nothing to unite the perceptions and provide a sense of sameness throughout life. Contemporary psychologists may be expected to be reasonably familiar with Hume's views, since William James quotes them extensively in his famous chapter on the self. However, there is not much discussion in contemporary psychology of the Humean position of the self, not even in textbooks of the history of psychology. Psychologists seem to think of it as a dead issue; many behaviorists apparently accept Hume's conclusions, while the self-theorists ignore them. At any rate, in my view there are some important implications of Hume's way of "looking" into the mind in search of the self that are worth considering. First, this looking implied that what was to be discovered had to be an *object* to be observed, something like a flower or a billiard ball, as it were. Like other objects in nature, this object was expected to cast an "impression," or an accurate reflection, in the mind's mirror. Second, Hume's approach, like that of his predecessor Locke, was molecularistic; knowledge was assumed to originate from elemental mental images or "ideas," and complex ideas representing complex objects were assumed to be matchingly complex compounds of simple ideas. Here are Hume's words from his famous passage on personal identity:

> But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is suppos'd to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. (1739/1978, p. 251)

It is obvious from Hume's words that he was indeed "looking" for something that is *invariable* throughout the lifetime of a person, and such a thing, he thought, must be an object to be known through its equally invariable, if perhaps also matchingly complex, mental image. What a set of assumptions. How could one expect to obtain in one's mind a sensory image - a *picture* - of a self or a person that never changes? Even James, who quotes the above words, misses the point that Hume had looked for, at best, the self-as-object. It is ironic that James, who goes to great lengths in making the distinction between self-as-subject as well as the self-as-object, ignores that Hume's search was wrongheaded from the very start, in that it completely ignores the possibilities and prospects for the self-as-subject. The self-as-subject is, by definition, not an object to be seen, heard, or touched, but rather is the experiencer of sights and sounds that is not itself seen, heard, or touched. Moreover, insofar as Hume was aiming at the self-as-object, how could he expect the bodily Me, the social Me, or the spiritual Me (meaning the ideas and other contents of the mind) to cast a fixed image in the mind, since all of them keep continually changing throughout life? Although James missed this point, his overall assessment of Hume's work, namely, that Hume's "Associationist Theory" fails to account for the unity of the mind, is nevertheless correct. So much for the Humean search for the self, which was (mis)guided by an epistemology based on the mirror metaphor.

At any rate, what was the result following from the conclusion of Hume's inquiry? Given that Hume's skepticism had undermined the project of science, as well as that of ethics, his introspective inquiry added a serious doubt about the existence of his own self. Hume took the implications of his doctrines seriously, and the effect on his emotional state was disastrous. In his concluding remarks, Hume said:

> Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, inviron'd with the deepest darkness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of every member and faculty. (Hume, 1739/1978, p. 269)

Thoroughly disgusted with the state to which the empiricist denial of the self had taken him, Hume said: "… I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and resolve never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy" (p.269). This was a personal sentimental ending of a remarkably cold and impersonal inquiry into the self. Indeed, Hume gave up philosophy in actual life and turned to something "interesting" instead. Remarks Conze (1963b): "… appalled by his own nihilism, [Hume] turned away from philosophy and occupied himself with re-writing the history of England in the interest of the Tory Party" (p. 114). Such reference to the personal life of an author

would appear to be an *ad hominem* kind of remark that is shunned in the atmosphere of cultivated impersonality in contemporary philosophical and scientific discourse. Then again, it is interesting to ask: When the self itself is the object of inquiry, could (or should) an inquirer remain completely unaffected by the implications of his conclusions for his own self? As is well known, Kant was so disturbed by reading Hume, that he set out to bring order to the worlds of science, ethics, and the self that Hume's conclusions had undermined. Before turning to Kant though, let us take a took at Skinner, who is as emphatic in the denial of the self in our times as Hume was in his.

B. F. Skinner: An Intellectual Successor to Bacon and Hume

In considering Skinner to be an intellectual successor to Hume, I do not wish to suggest either that Skinner's model is directly derived from Hume's or that it is a replica of the Humean model. Indeed, there are basic differences between Hume's and Skinner's views of what it means to "know" anything; for Skinner (1974), knowing involved forming "rules for action" (p. 139) in relating to the world and was not a matter of having images in the mind. Nevertheless, various kinds of difficulties in obtaining valid knowledge of the "self" provided the basis for Humean as well as Skinnerian denials of the self. Skinner (1974) complained, for instance, that knowledge of the supposed "inner causes of behavior" - attitudes, traits, or a self-was "entirely inferential" (p. 159). There are of course other, additional grounds for Skinner's denial of the self, especially the agentic self. In About Behaviorism, Skinner (1974) flatly declares that "[t]here is no place in the scientific position for a self as a true originator or initiator of action" (p. 225). In rejecting the mind and accepting a physicalist ontology and in accepting a mechanistic view of human action, Skinner reflects the views of Thomas Hobbes, which we shall examine in Chapter 6. At any rate, Skinner's response to the denial of the self was considerably different from that of Hume. To understand why, it would be useful once again to review the history of ideas that shaped his perspective. Skinner's own writings provide clues in this regard.

In his autobiography, Skinner (1983) notes how he had become "thoroughly Baconian" (p. 406) after reading Farrington's (1964) *Philosophy of Bacon,* and identifies three Baconian principles that he followed most closely: (1) Bacon's insistence on studying nature, not books; (2) the Baconian dictum, "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed;" and (3) Bacon's utopianism, whereby Skinner's *Walden Two* is directly inspired by Bacon's *New Atlantis* (see Skinner, 1983, pp. 406–413). In *About Behaviorism,* Skinner (1974) clarifies how he followed Bacon in viewing knowledge as *power:*

> We do not act by putting knowledge to use; our knowledge is action, or at least rules for action. As such it is power, as Francis Bacon pointed out in rejecting scholasticism and its emphasis on knowing for the sake of knowing.... The advancement ... of learning

> proposed by Bacon was the furthering of human behavior in the interest of the human condition, and the achievements of modem science show that he correctly foresaw its character. (p. 140).

Judged from Skinner's Baconian standards thus articulated, Hume would appear to be no successor to Bacon, but a throwback to the abominable scholastics guided by the sterile principle of "knowledge for its own sake." Skinner, however, is a true Baconian; his search for knowledge is guided by the benign and benevolent goal of the "improvement of the estate of man *[sic],"* as Bacon had put it. The value of improving the human condition guides Skinner's inquiry, although his commitment to value-free science seemed to prevent its expression in his scientific and technical writings. Skinner did express his values clearly, but their expression was sequestered from the scientific world and tucked away in his extracurricular writings. In the preface to the 1969 edition of his utopian novel, *Walden Two,* Skinner (1948/1969) says that his behavioral technology was to be used to create a society without quarreling, suspicion, jealousy, and competition and to promote mutual trust, love, and cooperation among people. These ideals are as sacred as motherhood, and I think hardly anybody would question him. Nor would anyone suspect Skinner's sincerity in pursuing them any more than Bacon's. But unlike Bacon, Skinner's focus is not so much on the control of Nature as on the control of human behavior in pursuit of an ideal society indicated in his *Walden Two.*

Control is one of the central themes of Skinnerian psychology that has generated a lot of controversy. If the Skinnerian technology of behavioral control is to be used for bringing about an ideal society as per design, then only those who understand the principles and goals of control would get to be controllers. But who would be the controllers and whose behavior would they control? Some critics had suspected that Skinner himself wished to be the controller — some kind of a benevolent dictator! In his autobiography, Skinner (1983, p. 321) has responded to all such suspicions and criticisms, and I see no reason to believe that Skinner had any dictatorial ambitions. Even if Skinner himself would not be the controller, would not some particular person(s) or group(s) have to be in the driving seat? In *About Behaviorism,* Skinner (1974, p. 206) suggests that it is a mistake to think that some particular individual - a compassionate therapist, industrialist, or scientist- would control everyone else. In his view, questions such as *"who* will control and to what *end"* are irrelevant or misdirected, because behavior is controlled not by "persons" but by a variety of contingencies of reinforcement, i.e., by food, words of praise, various aversive stimuli, and other such observable entities. Skinner's view of control is consistent with his denial of the concepts of self and personhood. For in his worldview, persons or agentic selves simply do not exist; observable entities or phenomena such as food or electric shocks do. Since there is no such thing as a self, the idea of self-control would be meaningless from the Skinnerian vantage point. Ironically, Skinner does not dismiss the concept of self-control; indeed, Skinner (1953) devotes an entire chapter of *Science and Human*

Behavior to this topic. Moreover, the psychologist Joe Kamiya (1972) has tried to show how Skinnerian operant techniques can be effective in establishing self-control over the electrical activity of the brain, thereby attaining the so-called "higher" states of consciousness. It is interesting that such applications of the techniques ofbehavior control are closer to Yoga, which implies a "psychology of the self," than to the Skinnerian model fashioned after Max Meyer's (1922) *Psychology of the Other-One.*

Skinner's denial of the self seems to follow the denial of the theological doctrine of the soul, which is accompanied by antireligious feelings, clearly and strongly expressed by Max Meyer, a fellow behaviorist whom Skinner quotes in an approving tone. Indeed, the antireligious attitudes that prevail in scientific circles are understandable against the backdrop of the inquisition of numerous pioneering scientists such as Vesalius and Galileo. Against this background, trying to relate Skinner's attitude toward control of behavior with the Baconian view of a God-given mandate would seem unreasonable. It is interesting, however, that Skinner himself has commented on the role of religious doctrines in shaping his views. In his autobiography, Skinner (1983) says: "Much of my scientific position seems to have begun as Presbyterian theology, not too far removed from the Congregational of Jonathan Edwards" (p. 403). These words, flowing from Skinner's own pen, are clearly relevant in understanding the meaning he attaches to the denial of the self.

It is important to note that in this context that Skinner (1983, pp. 402–403) explicitly recognized that his conception of a completely determined system of behavior is basically a reinterpretation of Jonathan Edwards's view of the doctrine of predestination. Skinner draws an important implication of a fully deterministic view of behavior: "Certainly it would be inconsistent to blame our sins on our genetic and environmental histories while continuing to claim credit for our achievements" (1983, p. 408). By the same token, it would be equally inconsistent to take credit for one's accomplishments and feel proud about them. Skinner took these ideas seriously and personally, as suggested by the following words:

> My analysis of the role of the individual in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* was so convincing that by the time I finished the book I actually did not feel that I had written it. I do not mean that I attributed it to some mystical "other one." There was no divine afflatus. My book was the inevitable consequence of what had happened to me and of what I had read. (1983, p. 409)

Notwithstanding Skinner's clearly secular stance, the surrender of will implied in the quote resonates with the theme of self-denial suggested by the popular expression "Thy will be done" in the Lord's Prayer, a common Christian prayer. In his autobiography, Skinner points out the parallel between his views of self-denial and those of the late medieval Christian author, Thomas à Kempis. Skinner puts it in the following words: "Assigning one's achievements to one's genetic and environmental histories is an act of self-denial that would have been understood by

Thomas a Kempis" (1983, p. 408). To put it in historical context, let me note Thomas à Kempis's views of self-denial expressed in his famous work, The *Imitation of Christ* (1470/1903). Following Matthew (16.24 and 19.21), Thomas a Kempis exhorts: "My son, thou canst not possess perfect liberty unless thou wholly renounce thyself ... Leave concupiscence and thou shall find rest" (1470/1903, pp. 168–169). Thomas à Kempis further exhorts us to stop pursuing self-interest and to give up covetousness, inquisitiveness, and gossiping. Skinner could not say all this under the banner of science, but he indicates close agreement with such views in his brief discussion of Thomas à Kempis's self-denial. Skinner explicitly recognizes that his denial of the self has many parallels in varied contexts: "The theme turns up," he says, "in mundane philosophy (e.g., Schopenhauer's annihilation of the will as the way to freedom) and literature (e.g., Conrad's Secret Sharer learning that true self-possession comes from self-abandonment). It is, of course, a strong theme in Eastern mysticism." (Skinner, 1983, p. 408).

Immanuel Kant's Affirmation of the Self

Immanuel Kant, who once said that he was awakened from his "dogmatic slumber" by the somber implications of Hume's conclusions, which had simultaneously undermined Newtonian physics on the one hand and the Protestant ethos on the other. Kant tried to do so by legitimizing the principle of causality in the sphere of science and by affirming autonomous agency and the concept of personhood within an ethical framework. True to the intellectual legacy of Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) and Christian Wolff (1679-1754), Kant's approach was distinctly "rationalist." His attack on the Lockean model followed Leibniz's tack, who had responded to Locke's notion of the mind as a *tabula rasa* by saying that only a mind that is attentive and prepared can *know* something or other; a totally empty mind cannot accomplish anything (see Robinson, 1976, pp. 260–262). Knowing does not mean simply reflecting what is out there like in a passive mirror, but actively organizing the information received through the senses. Kant elaborated this notion of the *active* mind that must begin with something in it from the start by conceiving of a set of the categories of the understanding with which the human mind is putatively equipped from birth.

Rychlak (1981) likens this Kantian notion of the initial preparedness of the mind to a *preformatted* sheet as opposed to the Lockean metaphor of the mind as a *blank* sheet of paper, and represents the point of view built into the mind by way of this preparation by a pair of glasses one wears, as it were, while inspecting the sensory data. This view suggests a top-down model of the acquisition of knowledge, where one begins with abstract and general ideas, rather than necessarily and always beginning with concrete data. The main activity of the mind involves placing an observation in one of the preexisting (i.e., *a priori)* categories of the understanding -white –black, edible–nonedible, and so on - and by *comparing* it

with other bits of information, as more or less desirable, and so on. Throughout the period of time that may elapse from the moment the mind first notices some object, places it in, say, the "edible" category, and judges it as desirable enough to try eat immediately, the mind, as knower, must remain *one* and the *same* entity, or else it could not accomplish the task of knowing something and acting accordingly.

To help understand how so, let us imagine that, half way through the process of acquiring information and judging its nature, the mind or the self-as-knower suddenly splits itself into two or more separate entities or gets transformed into something else other than its starting nature. Then, in the case of a split from within, the different "parts" of the knower would have to somehow unite together and combine the bits of information acquired by different parts at different times or else break the process of knowing before its completion. And should the knower change to something else half way through the process, how could the new knower that has acquired only the later part of the information complete the process without the benefit of the information acquired by the earlier self? To put it simply, the unity and sameness of the self-as-knower are the *necessary conditions* for the very possibility of knowledge. If the mind were a mere bundle of ideas passively witnessing or mirroring the world by way of an unconnected series of ideas, as Hume thought it was, then the very possibility of knowledge would have to be denied. It is simply *absurd* to think of the self-as-knower in any terms other than unity and continued existence.

This *reductio ad absurdum* represents a typical Kantian maneuver. It supplies the second, *rationalist* pillar to the edifice of the Enlightenment project of Newtonian science at a time when its first, *empiricist* pillar started to shake as soon as Hume took Locke's bottom-up approach to its logical conclusion. In his *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant (1781/1966) says:

> The reason why we postulate for every thought absolute unity of the subject is because otherwise we could not say of it, I think (the manifold in one representation). For although the whole of a thought may be divided and distributed under many subjects, the subjective I can never thus be divided and distributed. (p. 255)

Further, he adds, "Whatever is conscious of the numerical identity of its own self at different times, is ... a person" (p. 259). As can be easily seen, this line of argument leading to the postulation of the self-as-knower can be applied, *mutatis mutandis,* to the self-as-agent. For it should be clear that a course of action would be impossible without the continued existence of some agency that would initiate a course of action and cany on until accomplishing its intended goal. Small wonder, then, that Kant speaks explicitly of the *"permanence* of the agent" (p. 163, emphasis original). It is widely believed that Kant's affirmation of the Pure Ego or the self-as-knower in the *Critique of Pure Reason* was indeed effective in restoring the confidence in Newtonian science. Similarly, with his affirmation of the "autonomy of the will as a supreme principle of morality" (p. 59), in the

Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals, Kant (1785/1909) tried to uphold the ethical aspect of the Enlightenment project. Finally, in his *Critique of Judgment,* Kant (1790/1987) tried to explain the role of feelings in aesthetic as well as moral judgment. Thus, Kant affirmed the continued existence of Pure Ego and united the trilogy of mind, so as to demonstrate the logical viability of the concept of personhood along with the notion of personal identity.

Against this background, there should be no ambiguity as to *what* is affirmed by Kant by way of the Pure Ego and on what grounds. Kant (1781/1966) was explicit on the point that "[t]he identity of consciousness at different times is ... *a formal condition* only of my thoughts and their coherence, and proves in no way the numerical identity of my subject" (pp. 259–260; emphasis added). Kant was clear that his arguments proved the unity of thought only until that particular thought persisted, and in no way proved a lifelong unity and continuity of the subjective experience of the "I" that underlies the chain of thoughts. In fact, Kant adds in a footnote (1781/1966, p. 260) the metaphor of a series of discrete elastic balls representing each unitary pulse of cognition, such that each of these separate balls transmits the contents of its consciousness to the next. In such a case, although there would be a multiplicity of separate Jamesian Thoughts, the result would be the impression of the continued existence of the Thinker. Here, Kant's argument is qualitatively similar to Hume's metaphor of the boat, which keeps the continuity of its function despite the changes of parts under repair. Although such metaphors provide some understanding of how a sense of continuity might emerge through a succession of changing parts, it provided no proof for the numerical identity of an entity such as the boat or a person over a period of time. The fact that Kant repeatedly speaks of the *"logical* identity of the I" (1781/1966, p. 260) suggests that he implied "logical" in opposition to "factual." It should be clear from the above discussion that (1) what is affirmed by Kant as the Pure Ego is the continued existence of the self-as-knower as a necessary condition for the possibility of knowledge, and that (2) the only ground for its affirmation is logical postulation designed to escape the absurdity of its denial.

Against this background, we may consider James's criticism of the Kantian position: James's criticism is that (1) the Kantian "transcendental Ego" is not verifiable. This is correct because, as a mere logical postulate, the ego exists only in the logical space, so to speak; it has no place in the world of observation or experience. (2) As suggested by James, Kant's position is ambiguous, because on the one hand the Pure Ego is thought of as a condition for the possibility of knowledge, making it a (presumably passive) element in the equation that could not actively contribute to the process of knowing. On the other hand, the Pure Ego is also considered an agent, which must be actively engaged in the process of knowing and practically dealing with the world. How could something be both a passive condition and an active process at the same time? (3) As James (1890/1983) pointed out, "by Kant's confession, the transcendental Ego has no properties, and

from it nothing can be deduced.. .. The Ego is simply nothing: as ineffectual and windy an abortion as Philosophy can show" (pp. 344-345). In my view, this criticism is a bit too harsh; for if Kant's arguments were able to restore the strongly shaken faith in Newtonian science and Protestant morality in the Western world, they could not be worth nothing as James claimed. Yet, James is right to the extent that the Kantian postulation of the Pure Ego would make little difference in the life of most people; there could be no practical gains or existential benefits following from it.

Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson: Intellectual Successors to Kant

If one looks at the work of Piaget and Erikson against the backdrop of the intellectual history of the Western tradition, both of them might be seen as intellectual successors to Kant. Despite the many differences between their work and the work of Kant, there are significant aspects of their theories that are built on a Kantian foundation. Piaget explicitly discusses both the points of his agreement and disagreement with Kant, and the points of agreement are significant. Although Erikson says very little about Kant, in some ways he illustrates the spirit of Kant quite well, arguably better than any other contemporary psychologist. My purpose in analyzing the Kantian elements is not simply to conduct an exercise in the history of ideas, but to try to explicate the fundamental rationale of some of prominent contemporary Western theories to help deepen our understanding. I also expect this exercise to provide a framework for a meaningful cross-cultural comparison of the dialectics of the affirmation and denial of the self.

The strongest Kantian legacy expressed by Piaget is in his notion of the cognitive *schema,* which is most central to Piagetian psychology. In *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant (1781/1966, pp. 121–127) explains that a schema is an intermediate representation of phenomena that stands between an abstract and unchangeable category of the understanding in the purely rational realm on the one side, and changeable sensory representation of the phenomena in the empirical realm on the other. At several points in his *Biology and Knowledge* (e.g., pp. 53, 117) Piaget (1967/1971) has clarified how his conception of schema is derived by combining the insights of the philosopher Kant and the biologist Konrad Lorenz. In Piaget's system, the individual, as an active *organizer* of incoming information, uses preexisting schemata as if they were pigeonholes in a preforma into which pieces of information could be put, as appropriate. In the Kantian theory, as in the Piagetian, knowing is a top-down process, starting with ways of making meaning that putatively exist within the individual prior to the acquisition of experience and information. Thus, according to the Piagetian model, human cognitive development originates from the sensorimotor capacities with which a newborn baby is able to repeat patterned activities such as reaching out for objects and clasping and pulling them. In Chapter 4, we shall discuss Piaget's model of cognitive develop-

ment and examine its implications for the development of the self-as-knower. Here we may note that Piaget (1966) follows Kant closely in understanding not only the cognitive aspect but also the moral development of children. In Piaget's theory, human moral reasoning moves from an earlier stage of heteronomy, i.e., being directed from outside, through someone else's (the family's or teachers') prompting, to a more developed stage of autonomy, i.e., being self-driven and guided by completely internalized moral principles. This direction of development from heteronomy to autonomy is a virtual translation of the principles of morals enunciated by Kant (1785/1909) in his *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, 1984) and colleagues (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983), who follow Piaget in his studies of moral development, have built his system quite explicitly on neo-Kantian lines, often following Rawls's (1971) interpretation of Kant (see Kohlberg, 1984, p. 401). It tries to show how individuals tend to arrive at universal ethical principles such as the categorical imperative enunciated by Kant.

In the work of Piaget and Kohlberg, persons are obviously considered to be moral *agents* guided by their capacity to think about what is right and what is wrong. Some critics (e.g., Bailey, 1985; Rich, 1985) have argued that Kohlberg, like Piaget before him, has paid less attention to feelings than they deserve. Others (e.g., Straughan, 1985) have complained that Kohlberg's theory has neglected the complex relationship between moral judgment and moral *action*. In brief, the Piaget–Kohlberg studies are viewed as overdeveloped on how people think about moral issues but underdeveloped on how they feel and act morally. Regardless of such shortcomings, Piaget and Kohlberg deserve all the credit for bringing about a lush green oasis of studies of the moral aspect of persons in the middle of the value-free desert of modern psychology. Their relative neglect of feeling and action implies that Piaget and Kohlberg do not do adequate justice to the trilogy of the mind that is needed for a well-rounded account of personhood. This should partly explain why Piaget and Kohlberg have not been recognized as personality theorists in contemporary textbooks.

By comparison, Erik Erikson provides a relatively more well-rounded theory of personhood. He incorporates some of the Piagetian principles of cognitive development in his theory and supplements them amply with a rich account of affective development as well as a theory of social and identity development. Widely recognized as a personality theorist, Erikson speaks more clearly and emphatically than any other contemporary personality theorist about the development in the individual of a sense of autonomy and will guided by the feelings of shame and guilt, He views the individual explicitly within the framework of a social *ethos* and speaks of how, over the span of a lifetime, individuals arrive at the "acceptance of the fact that one's life is one's own responsibility" (1968, p. 139). Erikson thus develops a psychological model of the person as a responsible human being who thinks, feels, and wills. He has tried to place personhood in the center of

his theory, as Kant placed personhood at the center of Western thought during the Age of Enlightenment. Moreover, there is a tolerable consensus of opinion that Erikson's theory places identity at the center of his conception of personhood. Against this background, I shall present a fairly detailed overview of Erikson's theory of identity formation in the next chapter.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE DIALECTICS OF THE SELF IN INDIAN THOUGHT

The dialectical opposition between the yea-sayers and nay-sayers in regard to the self originated in the history of Indian thought over 2000 years prior to the articulation of similar dialectics in 18th-century Europe. A strong affirmation of the Self, or Ātman, is a central topic in the early Upanisads, which go back to the ancient era roughly between 1500 to 600 BCE. Gautama Buddha (ca. 563–483) strongly rejected the Upanisadic claims to a permanent Self. His doctrine of the no-self *(anattā)* was articulated in the first major system of Buddhist thought called the Theravāda, meaning the doctrine of the elders. This system is outlined in a set of texts called the Nikāyas, or *suttas,* which were composed in the Pali language sometime before the 3rd century BCE. Over the centuries, the Upaniṣadic ideas inspired six major systems of orthodox Indian thought, namely (1) Mīmāṁsā sometime also called the Pūrva i.e., earlier) Mīmāṁsā (2) Vedanta or Uttara (later) Mīmāṁsā (3) Sāṅkhya (4) Yoga, (5) Nikaya, and (6) Vaiśeṣika. Of these six systems, the Vedānta is arguably the strongest supporter of the doctrine of the Self. This system was articulated first by Bādarāyaṇa in the form of a set of aphorisms probably around the beginning of the Common Era, and was developed and popularized by Śaṅkara (ca. 788-820)[16] and his followers in subsequent centuries. Saṅkara's strong affirmation of the Self was clearly expressed in a dialectical opposition to the Buddhist denial of the self. The twin systems of Sankhya and Yoga also affirm a permanent Self. I shall discuss their views in Chapter 5.

The Buddhist denial and the Vedantic affirmation of the self readily present themselves as topics for East–West comparison. Indeed, serious scholars in comparative philosophy have gone to considerable length in comparing the Buddhist position with the Humean (e.g., Hoffmann, 1980), and the Vedantist doctrines with those of Kant (Bhattacharyya, 1907/1983). Given the great differences in time, sociocultural context, language, worldview, and many other factors that separate these apparently similar doctrines, the task of systematically comparing them is not easy, to say the least. Edward Conze (1963a,b), a well-known contemporary British scholar in the field of Buddhist studies, has pointed out that the thought patterns involved in the denial of the self in Buddhism and in Hume's work are very complex, and he has cautioned that this complexity has often led to spurious comparisons between the two. To help avoid superficial comparisons, he has suggested that comparative studies should look carefully at (1) the specific proposi-

tions presented in various texts, (2) the motivation in spelling them out, or the guiding purpose of the inquiry from which they emerge, (3) the arguments used in their justification, and (4) the social, cultural, and religious context in which the statements were made. A close look at such contexts should prevent us from being misled by "verbal coincidences [that] frequently mask the fundamental divergences" in underlying concepts (Conze, 1963b, p. 105). As can be easily seen, the first three of the four points suggested by Conze for careful consideration are very similar in spirit to the guidelines suggested earlier in this chapter for comparing the Humean denial and the Kantian affirmation of the self. To repeat them here, I suggest that it is necessary to specify what is affirmed or denied, on what grounds, the goals that guided the inquiry, and the consequences that follow from accepting specific conclusions. I propose to follow the same guidelines in making cross-cultural comparisons, while at the same time keeping Conze's suggestions in mind.

As noted by Conze, a distinctive feature of the Indian intellectual tradition was its *contemplative* character. Through the millennia, a contemplative quest for truth has gone hand in hand with a deeply personal interest in spiritual well-being. Although such a quest sometimes overlapped with what we call "religion" in the West, in India religious life was probably not organized around institutions like the church, nor was the spiritual quest tied closely to theism. Regardless of their doctrinal differences, the "heterodox" Buddhist scholars as well as the "orthodox" scholars of the various Upanisadic schools of thought shared a deep interest in meditative search for inner peace and personal edification. Yogic techniques were a commonly shared aspect of the meditative search for truth; there was no need to be a theist or to believe in specific doctrines such as those of Patanjali's Yoga in order to practice meditation. Such connection between meditative practices, personal spiritual quest, and formal philosophy contrasts with the dispassionate and impersonal search for truth in the Greek tradition of *theoria.* Also, the emphasis in meditative quest on the evidence of "inner" experience sharply contrasts with the insistence on publicly demonstrable truths in the Baconian tradition of science.

By mentioning the contrasts just noted, I do not wish to suggest a complete East–West dichotomy in such matters. As is well known, there has been in fact a Western counterpart of the contemplative and meditative quest; it is illustrated, for instance, in the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and in St. Augustine's search for truth in the inner domain of the human soul. According to Conze (1963b, p. 109), the meditative inquiry in the Christian tradition "vanished from sight from Northern Europe soon after the Reformation," although I see clear impressions of the same in Husserl's *Ideas* (1931/1962) and in his *Cartesian Meditations* (1933/1977). As we shall note in the following chapter, Erikson makes some Biblical references in his discussion of identity that echo the meditative and so-called "mystical" elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But these are rare in contemporary psychology. Although William James's (1902/1958) *Varieties of Religious Experi-*

ence pioneered modem psychological studies of mystical and religious experience, this has remained a taboo topic. Elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1984) I have discussed the historical background of this taboo and the problem it creates for East–West understanding on matters relating to the psychology of mysticism. The study of meditative practices is a topic closely related to religious and/or mystical experience because of the putative connection between them. Although meditation and the altered states of consciousness to which it is said to lead have caught the attention of many contemporary psychologists in the East as well as the West, research in this area is marginalized; it is rarely included in the mainstream of psychology today. We shall return to the issue of altered states of consciousness later on as appropriate. Here it is necessary to briefly refer to it since the evidence supporting both the denial and affirmation of the self in the Indian context is derived from the putative experience of altered or "higher" states of consciousness attained through various meditative practices such as those described in the varieties of Yoga.

The Affirmation of the Self in the Upanisads

There were two central topics of inquiry for the ancient Upanisads: the nature of the *self,* and the nature of *reality* as a whole. The Upanisadic sages conceived of an ultimate principle of reality, or existence itself, and called it *Brahman.* A major conclusion of their inquiry, which is repeated in several places, is that the Self is identical with Brahman.[17] But what does this thesis mean? What were the kinds of concerns that prompted their inquiry? By what means did they arrive at this conclusion?

We do not know much about the lives of persons who may have authored the Upanisads. In the Indian tradition their principles are often considered to be inspired or "heard" *(śruti),* rather than spoken, by embodied humans. Nevertheless, the texts say a bit about the kind of people who were engaged in dialogues, and the characters in conversation express their mundane as well as lofty concerns. One of the famous dialogues about the nature of the self is between the old sage Yājñavalkya with his two wives on the eve of his retirement from active life *(Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upanisad, 2.3.1–14;4.5.1–15).In this context, the sage says that love for such things as family, wealth, gods, scriptures, and everything else that we encounter in the mundane life of most people is only the result of our love for our own selves. Thus, one loves one's children not for their sake, but because we love to have our own needs (such as the need to be wanted, loved, and so on) satisfied through them. Hence, he says,, self is the subject deserving of the most serious study and contemplation. The *Svetāśvatara* Upanisad begins with an account of a conversation among a group of scholars who are raising a variety of issues for discussion: What is the cause or origin of the world? Is it Brahman (the ultimate principle of existence)? Whence are we born? What sustains our lives? Who controls the happiness and suffering in our lives? Is it Time, our inherent nature,

necessity, or chance, which determines that? In several places in the text that follows, there is reference to the self as an enjoyer and sufferer in life *(bhoktā)* Here we see a concern about suffering and happiness blended with a spirit of inquiry into profound philosophical issues.

In a famous dialogue in the *Kaṭha* Upanisad, a teenage boy, Naciketas, is described as engaged in a conversation with Yama, who was believed to be the gatekeeper of heaven and hell. This Upanisad offers a very brief but interesting account of how the young lad lands in such a strange spot in the first place. The story goes that one day Naciketas realizes that his father was giving away all his belongings to the gods in a form of sacrificial worship. So he asks his father whether he was going to give his son away as well. Shocked by this preposterous question, the old man says yes in a fit of anger, and his words come true. As a result, Naciketas lands at the gate of heaven and hell, but cannot enter because Yama, the gatekeeper and himself the god of death, was away on earth on his regular round to pick ripe souls. Upon his return, Yama finds this unexpected guest stranded at the gate for 3 days. Embarrassed by having inadvertently failed to provide hospitality to this unexpected guest, Yama grants Naciketas three wishes. As per his first wish, the boy asks that all his father's wishes be fulfilled and that he be united with a cheerful father.

This wish granted, Naciketas then asks for the secret knowledge of the heavenly fire, which grants him a place in the heaven. For his third and final wish, Naciketas asks for the secret of what lies beyond birth and death. Now Yama is not ready to grant him this wish; he offers Naciketas a lot of things instead: innumerable cattle, horses, elephants, and gold, a great abode on earth, and sons and grandsons for as many years as he might desire. Naciketas rejects this offer, saying that all worldly pleasures and things are but ephemeral. Yama repeatedly cajoles the boy, pleading with him to ask for something else, and offers him an empire on earth, immense powers to enjoy the wealth and pleasures, plus chariots, lyres, and beautiful heavenly maidens unavailable to mortals. Naciketas turns down this offer too, insisting that pleasures of the earth and in the heaven would come to an end some time or other; he would rather know what lies ahead right now.

Pleased by the boy's determination, Yama commends him for being able to distinguish between the pleasurable *(preyas)* and the Good *(śreyas)* in the first place, and then also for opting for the Good instead of pleasure. Yama decries persons blinded by the lure of wealth and pleasures and appreciates Naciketas's rare aspiration to reach for something higher. Upon hearing this, Naciketas pleads with Yama to reveal to him the true knowledge *(vidyā)* of what lies beyond what is right *(dhama)* and not right *(adhama),* beyond the past and the future, saying, in other words, that he wished to grapple with the absolute and eternal principles (Kaṭha, 2.14). Yama then proceeds to instruct him about the nature of the Self, the eternal principle in persons that never changes. This principle, Yama says, is tinier than the atom and larger than the largest of things, it is the One underlying the

Many, the Permanent *(nitya)* behind the Ephemeral *(anitya)* in the entire universe. It cannot be divided or destroyed; the Self is not killed by the destruction of the body. It is by knowing the changeless Self behind all the changes that one attains immortality. But the knowledge of the Self cannot be obtained by listening to a lot of lectures or by reasoning anymore than happiness can be gained by spending money. The Knowledge *(vidyā)* of the eternal principle *(akṣara)* is quite different from the knowledge of changeable *(kṣara)* objects in the world. One cannot obtain the Knowledge by reaching out to objects in the world; Knowledge of the Self is hidden deep within the innermost self, in the very "heart" of the person. It lies beyond the senses, the mind, and the intellect; its essence cannot be seen with the eyes or captured by the mind or by words, for the Self is not observable and locatable within physical bodies; it is disembodied, and hence everywhere like space. Toward the end of the text, the *Kaṭha* Upanisad (6.10–11)explains that the Self is experienced when, through the practice of Yoga, the five senses are held back, the mind is undistracted, and the intellect is stabilized.

We may pause here to reflect on the nature of the Upanisadic inquiry. From the short description of characters involved in the dialogues, the Upanisadic texts convey that the topic of their inquiry was fit for conversations between husband and wife, father and son, teacher and student, groups of scholars, and other mortals. There is repeated reference to things liked and disliked, to the desire to overcome the suffering in the lives of ordinary mortals, and to the aspiration to gain happiness higher than that available to emperors on earth and souls in heaven. The kind of happiness they thought of is not the kind that is shared by the residents of a utopian society - the kind that has attracted Westerners from Plato through Bacon to Skinner. The Upanisadic quest for happiness and for the highest good is typically fit not for the society as a whole, but for *individuals* aiming at nothing but the highest standards and willing to turn away from the mundane pleasures in pursuit of the same. In pointing this out I do not mean to suggest that the Indian tradition as a whole was disinterested in the happiness of the society as a whole or in the problems of governance attached to that concern. The popularity of the great Indian epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābharata, is testimony to the abiding interest in India in the problems of the society and of its governance. Moreover, a great many Indians continue to worship the goddess of wealth, and their unabashed interest in the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh is displayed in classic sexological treatises like the *Kāma Sūtra* and the erotic sculptures of Khajuraho. Yet, there is also a strong and historically persistent cultural theme of the value of the pursuit of a perpetual inner source of nonsensual experience of bliss, which is the guiding principle of the Upanisadic inquiry. Let us look a bit closer look at the bliss they sought and how one attempts to attain it.

As the story of Naciketas indicates, the bliss sought by the Upanisads was neither worldly pleasure nor otherworldly in the sense of what is putatively gained

in heaven. It was not "religious" in the sense that it was to be dispensed through the grace of God. Although the story of Naciketas features a god called Yama, he recommends the practice of Yoga as a means to attain i t - a means available to ordinary mortals here on earth. As noted by Dasgupta (1922/1975), and rightly in my opinion, "[t]here is no relation here of the worshipper and the worshipped and no prayers are offered to it, but the whole quest is of highest truth, and the true self of man is discovered as the greatest reality" (Vol. 1, p. 33). There is a deep concern in the Upanisads for the highest Good, and yet the Upanisadic thinkers are eager to take the inquiry beyond the realm of the right and the wrong. This stance is consistent with the dispassionateness of the Greek *theoria;* it even echoes the spirit of "value-free" science. Yet, to the extent that the Good *(śreyas)* is sought, the Upanisads show no interest in changing the world as does Baconian science, and like St. Augustine they look inward for truth.

Here, insofar as the Self affirmed by the *Kaṭha* Upanisad is nonspatial, indivisible, and indestructible, it might seem to be the same as the Cartesian unextended soul-substance. However, the similarity between the two is quite superficial; the Upaniṣads did not equate the self, soul, and the mind as Descartes did, nor did they think of the Self as a substance with thinking, or *cogito,* as its main attribute. Besides, while Descartes thought in terms of a thoroughgoing dualism that equated the self with the mind and attributed to it the capacity to experience pleasure and pain, most Upanisads thought strictly in monistic terms and conceived of the Self as beyond the mind and beyond the experience of pleasure and pain. Although the Upanisads were concerned with overcoming suffering, they were not motivated by the concern to avoid damnation on the Day of Judgment, as was Descartes. Indeed, it seems fair to say that *what* the Upanisads thought the Self was is inextricably connected with *how* they suggested it should be known. Unlike Descartes, whose "meditations" essentially displayed an exercise of the power of reasoning, the Upaniṣadic quest was fundamentally contemplative. Indeed, the Upanisads inspired a psychology and a view of consciousness radically different from Western psychology in the shadow of Descartes.

The *Maṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad explains in 12 short versus the stance that is necessary to adopt in order to know the Self. At the outset it declares that the Self is identical with the Brahman *(ayamātmā brahma).* Then it goes on to distinguish the various states of consciousness and their distinctive features. First is the wakeful state of consciousness characterized by an outwardly cognitive *(bahiḥprajña)* stance. It allows us to deal with gross *(sthūla)* objects in the public domain of the external world accessible by means of the five sense organs and the five motor organs aided by the mind and the intellect. Second, the *dream* state is characterized as inwardly cognitive *(antaḥprajña)* stance, which provides access to the exclusive and isolated *(vivikta)* domain of the individual's private world. Third, the state of *deep sleep* is said to be characterized by a unified *(ekī bhūta)* stance that is neither

inward looking nor outward looking and allows us to enjoy a certain kind of quietude and bliss (ananda) Last, the *fourth* state of consciousness is described as follows:

> Not inwardly cognitive, not outwardly cognitive, not both-wise cognitive, not a cognition-mass, not cognitive, not non-cognitive, unseen, with which there can be no dealing, ungraspable, having no distinctive mark, non-thinkable, that cannot be designated, the essence of the assurance of which is the state of being one with the Self, the cessation of development, tranquil, benign, without a second. He is the Self (Atman). (*Mandukya* Upanisad, 7th stanza; translation by R. E. Hume, 1931, p. 392; quoted without the Sanskrit terms in parentheses)

It should be obvious from the above that the evidence for the Self affirmed by the Upanisads is derived from the *fourth state* of consciousness, the like of which is not usually recognized either by contemporary psychology or by the empiricist or rationalist epistemologies shaped by the Enlightenment thinkers. This is where we can see some of the deepest differences between the Indian and Western epistemologies in general, and psychologies in particular. This is an important topic that deserves some clarification and comments.

Once again, as noted in the remarks of Conze cited earlier in this section, the contemplative approach to truth, which was very much part of the neo-Platonic tradition from at least Plotinus to Meister Eckhart, has become marginalized in the West. With all the insistence on the evidence of *experience* in the tradition of British empiricism, an unwritten Western convention limits the scope of experience to the wakeful state of consciousness; the evidence of all other states is excluded out of hand. Freud was an exception to this rule; he tried to open the doors to insights to be gained from the content of dreams and from the depths of the unconscious, and Jung tried to peek into the mysteries of the "oceanic feeling." However, by and large, Western psychology has neglected the evidence of the altered and "higher" states of consciousness. It seems to me that a primary reason for such neglect is that the so-called "higher" states attainable through various forms of meditation or contemplation have been considered "mystical." Moreover, the term *mystical* has unfortunately acquired several pejorative connotations, such as mysterious, irrational, and dangerous. In a previous publication (Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 27–29) I have pointed out how in his essay, "Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," the British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1935, p. 66) has portrayed the contemplative approaches as a "lazy man's philosophy," and has deprecated mysticism in several ways in many of his writings (see, e.g., Russell, 1917, pp. 1–32). Although many Western psychologists today may have shed such negative bias, the study of "altered states of consciousness" has been marginalized.

The result of the neglect of the evidence of the altered state of consciousness in the West is what Charles Tart (1972) has called the "state-specific sciences." In the study of the natural sciences, the exclusion of the altered states does not matter, because the subject matter of the natural sciences resides in the public domain,

accessible to all through the wakeful state of awareness. But their exclusion from psychology restricts the very subject matter of psychology, which should normally include the entire domain of experience, including the whole spectrum of the varied states of consciousness. As noted, the exclusion of experience altogether from psychology leads to an approach like Skinner's, which rejects the self out of hand along with the mind and becomes a study of the behavior of *others*. It is ironic indeed that those who sing the glory of empiricism ask us to rely on the evidence of experience, but the range of experience we are supposed to rely on in the name of science is severely limited. Although the rationalist epistemology allows us to include abstractions "added by the mind" to what is given in experience, the rationalist approach, too, restricts its scope to the wakeful state of awareness. Nevertheless, the rationalist approach provides an invaluable complement to empirical knowledge, and as far as self-knowledge goes, reason can merely provide a strong argument in support of the need to grant the continued existence of the self-as-knower, as Kant's contributions have shown. However, such an approach does not provide any experiential evidence to help *verify* the existence or nature of the self-as-knower. It is precisely by providing verifiable sources of self-knowledge that the Upanisadic tradition complements the shortcomings of the combined resources of empiricism and rationalism.

What the Upanisads offer is not simply a doctrinaire affirmation of the Self, plus some verbal pointers to on essentially indescribable Self; they also offer a clear account of what would be attained through the experience of the Self, and suggest specific ways to get it. The *Taittirīya* Upanisad (2.1), for instance, describes the Brahman to be attained through the realization of the Self as the Truth *(satyam),* Knowledge *(jñānam),* and Infinite *(anantarn).* One who knows this, it declares, has all desires fulfilled. Further (in 2.5), it says that the Self consists of Bliss *(ānanda).* The *Taittirīya* Upanisad (2.8) also provides an account of a graded series of increasingly higher levels of bliss. It starts by counting the happiness attained by a strong, agile, and well-read youth, who has the world's wealth at his disposal, as the base unit of bliss: the highest that a human being can enjoy. A 100-fold of this, it suggests, is the bliss of the angels, and a 100-fold of that is the bliss of certain other species of superhuman creatures, and so on. Through such a geometric progression, it finally estimates the Bliss of Brahman to be 100 quintillion times higher than what a young, well-endowed human being can enjoy. One is not sure whether to dismiss this estimate as a hyperbole, for bliss is said to be something beyond both pain and pleasure, and because its search is said to demand the resolute cultivation of dispassionateness. Be that as it may, the consequence of experiencing the Self is supposed to be most highly positive. If the ways to get there are well specified, then it would at least be possible in principle to check on the cash value of the sumptuous promissory note.

The Upanisads do in fact suggest the way to attain Self-realization. The *Brhadaranyaka* Upanisad (2.4.5; 4.5.6) suggests studying, reflection, and contempla-

tion *(sravana, manana, nididhydsana)* as steps to be taken for attaining self-realization. This suggestion has been explained in detail and developed into a systematic "technology of the self" by generations of followers of the system of the Advaita Vedanta The Advaita Vedāntic approach will be briefly outlined in the next chapter, and the processes involved in the recommended path to self-realization will be discussed in cognitive psychological terms in Chapter 4. Here, it may be noted that the Upanisads refer to other approaches as well. For instance, the *Maitrāyaṇī* Upaniṣad (6.18), which is considered one of the relatively later Upanisads, also mentions breathing exercises and other techniques described in Pataiijali's Yoga aphorisms as a means to the experience of *samādhi* an altered state that ostensibly involves the direct experience of the Self. If one so desires, one could follow the steps recommended by either the Advaita Vedantic or the Yogic path, and depending on what one obtains at the end of the path, the Upanisadic affirmation of the Self and claims regarding its nature might be either verified or falsified.

The Denial of the Self in Early (Theravāda) Buddhism[18]

As indicated by the widely known story of his life, Siddhartha Gautama became disillusioned with the wealth and power he enjoyed as a young and happily married prince, and, tormented by the sight of suffering, chose an ascetic life in search of a radical solution to the problem of suffering. Unlike Hume, a gentleman scholar who practiced philosophy as a rigorous intellectual exercise without an ostensible purpose other than "knowledge for its own sake," Gautama passionately followed a contemplative path to help end suffering for himself, and perhaps for the world at large. He practiced Yoga, which was part of an established tradition, although as far as we know today, an explicit theory of Yoga in the form of Patañjali's aphorisms had not yet been formulated. That Gautama followed the Yogic tradition suggests that he ostensibly believed in the evidence of the altered states of consciousness. As the story goes, Gautama attained enlightenment after practicing austerities for years, and then set out to give his message to the world. The texts of Theravada Buddhism are said to state the gist of Gautama's teachings.

According to Gautama, the root cause of suffering is the thirst *(taṇhā* in Pāli) for continued existence. It is common for people to try to acquire things that they like, to feel attached to the accouterments of the Me and Mine, and to desire for their perpetual possession. Born in this process is the tacit assumption that the "I" or self is an abiding entity that will continue to exist, keep the possession of good things, hopefully adding increasingly better ones to its stock, in perpetuity. But it is self-evident that everything in life, including everything about the person as a psychophysical being, is impermanent. According to Gautama, a person with mind and body *(nāma, rūpa)* consists of five elements *(pañca khandhas):* (1) material form *(rūpa),* (2) feeling or sensation *(vedanā),* (3) perception *(saññā),*

(4) mental dispositions arising from impressions left behind by past experience and behavior *(saṁkhāra),* and (5) reason or intelligence *(viññāna).* All of these aspects of personhood are impermanent. They have no absolute existence; they exist only relatively or in loose relationship with one another. It is a fundamental error to think of oneself as some permanent entity that is identical with, or in possession of, some material form, perception, feeling, disposition, or reason. Thus, if I think of myself as having a handsome and healthy body, or a happy feeling, or a humane disposition, or possessing superior intelligence, it would no doubt be deeply frustrating to find myself no longer to be what I thought I was forever.

Against the background of this sort of reasoning, what Gautama denied was the concept of the self, soul, or ego as an abiding or unchangeable entity. It should now be clear why the Upanisadic concept of the Ātman was unacceptable to Gautama. Such denial is very much understandable insofar as the Upanisads occasionally use the term Ātman in compound forms such as *jīvātman,* implying a bodily self, thereby suggesting a dubious equation of an unchanging soul with a mutable living being or an everrevisable cognition. Gautama insisted that the impermanent states of perception, feeling, behavioral disposition, and so on succeed one another without having any underlying permanent, self-identical substance to unite them. Thus far, the Buddhist denial of the self would appear to be compatible with the Humean denial of the self. However, the similarity is deceptive, because, unlike Hume who rejected a necessary connection between cause and effect, Gautama neither questioned causality nor did he doubt the possibility of moral action for the questionable connection between intentions and subsequent actions.

One of Gautama's axiomatic assumptions was the "law of dependent origna-tion" *(paṭiccasamuppāda* in Pali, *pratītyasamutpāda* in Sanskrit), which suggests that "from the arising of this that arises; if this is not that does not come to be" (*Saṁyutta-nikāya* 11, 64–65;see Conze, Homer, Snellgrove, & Waley, 1954, p. 66). This amounts basically to the acceptance of causality, which is precisely the idea that Hume denied. Moreover, as noted by Rhys Davids (1934, pp. 48–49), Gautama believed in the concept of *dhamma,* which implied a cosmic principle of orderliness in physical, psychical, and moral domains. The following words from *Suttapiṭaka* indicate the Buddhist assumption of a moral order in the world: "Not of the like result are right and wrong ... Wrong leads to baleful, right, to happy doom *[sic]* " (quoted by Rhys Davids, 1934, p. 49). These words echo the "Law of Karma," which is widely recognized by students of Indian thought as a matter of belief shared equally by most schools of Buddhist as well as Upanisadic thought throughout the ages. Moreover, most Buddhists also believe in the idea of the transmission of the consequences of good and bad actions across life cycles.[19] This idea follows as a corollary of the doctrine of karma for, given the common observation that many good deeds go unrewarded and sins unpunished within the same life cycle, all unfinished accounts must be eventually settled. This could not

happen except in subsequent life cycles in which the individual would be reborn. How could the Buddha believe, on the one hand, in perpetual moral accountability of persons in an endless series of life cycles and, on the other hand, deny an abiding self at the same time?

The answer to this puzzle lies in the Buddhist view that what transfers from one life cycle to another in the "wheel of existence" *(bhavacakra)* is not some kind of a fixed "soul," but karma, meaning the consequences of good and bad actions. A new form of life is born when an old one dies, even as one candle extinguishes while passing its flame to the next. Thus, according to Buddhism, as Rhys Davids (1901) puts it, "[b]irth is not rebirth, but new birth; transmigration of soul becomes transmigration of karma; metempsychosis gives way to metamorphosis" (p. 433).[20] Even if one accepts the idea that after the end of one life cycle a different one begins, what about the continuity within any given cycle? Would it not be the same person who enjoys or suffers the consequences of one's own good and bad actions while undergoing *changes* or metamorphoses within a given life cycle? Gautama's unique way of reconciling antinomies like sameness and change, or permanence and impermanence, suggests a way out of this dilemma. Here is a translation of his words attributed to him in a text known as *Udāna:*

> Some say that the "I" endures after death; others say it perishes. Both have fallen into grievous error. For if the "I" be perishable, the fruit people strive for will perish too and then deliverance will be without merit. If, as others say, the "I" does not perish, it must always be identical and unchanging. The moral aims and salvation would be unnecessary, for there would be no use in attempting to change the unchangeable ... (Words from Udana quoted by Krishnan, 1952, p. 359)

These words nicely capture a moralist's dilemma: Personal identity must be granted for justice to be made, since only the same person who did something right or wrong may be appropriately rewarded or punished. On the other hand, persons cannot be assumed to remain identical or unchanged if improvement is expected. Gautama tried to avoid being caught between the horns of this dilemma by choosing a *middle course* between the opposite poles of the sameness-versus-change antinomy. In *Visuddhimagga* (xvii), he is reported as saying that the doctrine of the middle course

> rejects the heresy that he who experiences the fruit of the deed is the same as the one who performed the deed, and also rejects the converse one that he who experiences the fruit of a deed is different from the one who performed the deed.... (Quoted in Mathur, 1978, p. 257)[21]

To put it in contemporary phraseology, Gautama accepted personal identity as identity-in-difference. It is hard to say whether this view of personal identity provides a completely rational solution. Gautama thought that it is impossible to provide rational solutions to such problems as whether the world has a beginning or no beginning, whether a person remains the same or changes. When someone asked such questions, he often chose to remain silent.

Gautama's silence on the issue of permanence versus impermanence of the self suggests that there is no definite answer to this question, one way or another. This sounds strikingly similar to Hume's indecision or skepticism. But unlike Hume, who found such ambiguity of the situation to be intolerable, and who ran away from philosophy for a life in pursuit of pleasure, Gautama remained steadfast and persisted with an ascetic lifestyle. While both Gautama and Hume found the mind to be in a perpetual state of flux without an abiding self to hang on to, Gautama tamed the runaway stream of consciousness by means of Yogic meditation. The idea of the flowing character of the stream of thought-and other continual changes, for that matter-is represented in Buddhism by the metaphor of the flame, and putting a stop to the flow of this stream is likened to the extinction of a flame. Indeed, the literal meaning of the Sanskrit term *nirvāṇa* (Pāli: *nibbāna)* is to extinguish a flame or fire. Buddhists claim that the ostensibly planned and deliberate cessation of thought processes effectively tames or extinguishes desires that fuel the self-perpetuating process of becoming that manifests in life. According to *Samyutta-nikaya* (II, 117), "The stopping of becoming is nirvana" (Conze et al., 1954, p. 92).

As noted by Dasgupta (1922/1975), scholars of Buddhism have tried to understand and explain the state of *nirvāṇa* The Pali texts describe it variously as "a happy state, as pure annihilation, as an inconceivable existence or as a changeless state" (Vol. 1, p. 108). Regardless of differences of opinion about its precise nature, *nirvāṇa* does not amount to death; one who attains it comes back to ordinary states of awareness; the flame is rekindled, so to speak. Obviously Gautama must have returned to an ordinary wakeful state when someone asked him to say whether the self was permanent or mutable. But by that time, having once experienced the state of nirvana he could take dialectics of thought, as well as the inevitable dialectics of the lure of pleasure and the fear of pain, in his stride. He did not need an ego with elaborate defense mechanisms to fend off the greedy and selfish id on the one side and a repressive superego on the other. It is in this sense that the Buddhist denial of the self leads to selflessness.

Notes

1. For details of the debate over this issue, see G. Hunt and J. B. Scott (1920, pp. 215–251, and particularly pp. 233 and 239) for references to the three-fifths rule. I wish to thank Professor Michael Fellman for helping me in understanding the nature of this issue, and in finding appropriate references for it.
2. For the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada, see *Dominion Law Reports,* 1928, Vol. 4, pp. 98–125; and for the ruling of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on Edwards v. Attorney General of Canada, see *Western Weekly Reports,* 1929, Vol. 3, pp. 479-495.
3. Kane (1968, Vol. 5.2, p. 1995) quotes the following words from the *Ṛg Veda* (6.86.5): "mā va eno anyakṛtam bhujema," which almost literally means: May we not have to suffer for the sin committed by another.

4. This is a translation by Kane of a verse from a chapter called the Santiparvan (153.38) of the epic Mahabharata. In this instance, unlike in most others, Kane does not quote the original words in Sanskrit
5. Nāhī devāpāśī mokṣāce gathle | āṇuni nirāḷe dyāve hātī || Tukārām, poem No. 2325.
6. Various Upanisads use different synonymous terms, all meaning "self as a knower": *jñatāman* (*Katha*, 3.4), vijñānātman (Praśna, 4.9), *vijñānamaya ātman (Mundaka* 3.2.7), and *jñātā (Brhudāraṇyaka* 2.4.14). The idea of the self as enjoyer/sufferer appears in the *Katha* (3.4) and the *Śvetaśvatara* (1.8 & 12).
7. The words quoted here are from Haldane and Ross's translation of Descartes's (1911, Vol. 1) Meditation II of his *Meditations on the First Philosophy.*
8. The Sanskrit term closest to the contemporary connotation of cognition is perhaps *prajñā.* It seems to me that there are several terms such as *vijñāna* and others derived from the root *jña* meaning "to know," and are suggestive of selective shades of what we call cognition. While the perceptual aspects of cognitive processes are often covered in Sanskrit literature in the context of epistemological discussion on direct perception as a source of valid cognition *(pramāna),* the constructive aspect of cognition is implied in the notions of *saṁkalpa*, meaning cognitive synthesis or integration, and *vikalpa* meaning analysis and differentiation. I think *bhrāva* is the Sanskrit term closest to affect, and *karma* is the closest equivalent of conation. These parallels will be discussed in separate chapters devoted to the trilogy of mind.
9. In the *Brhadāranyaka* Upanisad (4.5.6), the sage Yājñavalkya, in the context of speaking to his two wives about his plans to retire from active life, says that everyone should try to know about and meditate on the true nature of the Self. Everything is understood when the nature of the Self is understood:

   ātmā va are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi | ātmani khalvare dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāta idam sarvm viditam ||

10. Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that I have been unable to find the terms "knower, feeler, and doer" in Bertocci's paper; they seem to be Allport's way of describing what Bertocci was trying to say. Nevertheless, | have retained Allport's words since they are an exact translation of Upanisadic view of the self as a *jñātā, bhoktā, and kartā* There is a major difference between Bertocci's view of the self and that of the Advaita Vedantist view of the Self in the Upanisadic tradition. While Bertocci (1945) thinks that "there is no acceptable reason for postulating an inactive . . . self or soul beyond or underlying these activities" (p. 92), it is precisely such a Self that the Advaita Vedāntist have postulated. This difference will be discussed in the last chapter of this volume.
11. As we shall see in Chapter 4, Rom Harré (1987) offers a different account of the directionality of thoughts and of the selfsameness of the subject-pole of consciousness.
12. For an English translation of Patañjali Yoga aphorisms, see J. H. Woods (1914/1972) or R. Prasada (1912).
13. In an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1986). I have discussed how the practice of meditation as recommended by the Advaita Vedanta would help an individual in transcending exclusive identification with a limited social sphere or with a totalitarian ideology.
14. Mead's views of the self are scattered in many of his writings. For a concise and organized statements of Mead's model, see Mead (1925/1968) and Meltzer (1972).
15. The words of Bādarāyaṇa's asphorism are: *anusmṛteśca* /
16. These dates of the life of Śaṅkara are not highly certain. Professor Karl H. Potter pointed out to me (in a personal communication) that the recent work of Allan Thrasher places the dates about a century earlier.
17. The following are the "great statements" *(mahā vākyas),* all of which basically mean "Thou art

THAT," or that the Ātman is identical with the Brahman. These are quoted and discussed in the fifth chapter of the Pañcadaśi of Vidyāraṇya:

aham brahmāsmi iti | *(Bṛhadāraṇyaka,* 1.4.10)
ayamātmā brahma | *(Bṛhadāraṇyaka,* 4.4.5)
tattvamasi, Śvetaketo iti | *(Chāndogya,* 6.8.7)
prajñānam brahma | *(Aitareya,* 3.3)

18. For an introductory account of the basic principles of Buddhist psychology, see Kalupahana (1987).
19. According to Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1): *"All* the Indian systems agree in believing that whatever action is done by an individual leaves behind it some sort of potency which has power to ordain for him joy or sorrow in the future according as it is good or bad" (p. 71; emphasis added). The doctrine of rebirth is a corollary of this doctrine, and the Buddha believed in it as well. In this connection, Dasgupta adds that "there has seldom been before or after Buddha any serious attempt to prove or disprove the doctrine of rebirth.... The Buddha also accepts it as a fact and does not criticize it" (p. 87).
20. I am grateful to David Ho for bringing this point to my attention.
21. Mathur refers to the following as the source of this quote: H. C. Warren (1963, p. xiv) *Buddhism in translations,* New York: Atheneum.

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3

Two Perspectives on Person, Self, and Identity

Two Perspectives

The purpose of this chapter is to present in some detail two perspectives on person, self, and identity, one each from the Indian and Western traditions. These are not being presented as "representing" two traditions; indeed, it makes no sense to think that one could find a single perspective that adequately represents a rich and long tradition full of diverse perspectives within its fold. Nevertheless, it makes sense to bring together outlines of at least one perspective from each tradition so as to provide a meaningful context for a discussion of certain distinctive contributions of the differing traditions. Placing two perspectives close together should provide a meeting point for two different cultural horizons, and should give an opportunity to build some conceptual bridges, so to speak. Given the wide cultural gap that separates the traditions, one cannot expect to build a bridge just anywhere; it makes sense to look for a region where the gulf is narrow and the ground is solid, as it were. In my view, the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic perspectives on person, self, and identity present some essential commonalities to warrant a meaningful comparison. Both perspectives focus on the person as a responsible human being functioning within a moral order: both affirm selfhood, albeit in their own different ways; both sharply distinguish themselves from rival perspectives within their respective traditions that deny the self; and both place the issue of selfsameness at the core of their respective views of personhood. While it is important to start with the recognition of such similarities that warrant placing them side by side, it is equally important to remember Conze's warning, discussed in the previous chapter, that we must avoid spurious comparisons based on superficial similarities. To avoid this and to define the scope of their comparability, I will clarify certain important *differences* in the background, goals, and the nature of theory construction of the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedantic viewpoints.

THE CONTEXT AND GOALS OF THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC AND ERIKSONIAN PERSPECTIVES

The Advaita Vedanta has been widely recognized as one of the major "visions" *(darśana),* or competing perspectives, in Indian thought. These perspectives often have been considered to be "systems of philosophy," somewhat comparable to the Aristotelian, Kantian, or Hegelian philosophies of Western thought. However, as noted by Halbfass (1981/1988, Ch. 15), most of the Indian visions or *darśanas* should *not* be interpreted as systems of "pure theory" in the Greek–European sense. In addition to having conceptual frameworks based on the analytical spirit of investigative science (called *ānvikṣikī* in Sanskrit) similar to that of the various systems of Western philosophy, the Indian *darśanas* such as Yoga and the Advaita Vedhta also have a practical program, which is called a "science of the self" *(ātmavidyā, adhyātmavidyā)* in the Indian tradition. As noted in Chapter 1, it would be appropriate to compare the Indian *science* of the self with what Foucault (1982/1988) has called the *technologies* of the self, i.e., sophisticated methods of knowing and taking care of oneself that developed in the Western tradition. The technologies of the self are comparable to psychotherapy to the extent that they involve methods for the application of psychological knowledge for changing the human condition from a less desirable to a more desirable state. Indeed, Saṅkara, the chief exponent of the Advaita Vedānta, explicitly uses a medical metaphor comparing desires with disease for which Vedanta prescribes self-knowledge and detachment as remedy (see Saṅkara, 1973, 19.1).[1] This "applied" feature of the Advaita Vedanta brings it close to Erikson's approach insofar as the latter follows Freud's lead in attempting to alleviate human anxieties by means of insight into the place of the ego in the functioning of the psyche.

In suggesting the comparability of the applied or "therapeutic" aspects of Advaita Vedantic and Eriksonian approaches, I am not implying that they pursue exactly the same goals, for there are clear differences in the kind of problems for which they devise remedies and in the conceptions of "health"-or ideal human condition-that they aim to achieve. Erikson's approach developed in the context of a clinical practice where he helped mildly or severely disturbed children and youth and in the longitudinal study of bright undergraduates who he studied at Harvard University (Murray, 1938/1962). While in the clinical context the aim was ostensibly to redress anxieties and other symptoms of pathology and to achieve normalcy, in nonclinical contexts Erikson (1968, p. 92) cherished Marie Jahoda's notion of *positive mental health* as the goal to strive for. According to Jahoda (1955), a positively healthy person is characterized by the mastery of the environment rather than mere adaptation to it, unity of personality, ability to perceive oneself and the world realistically or correctly, and so on. As we shall see later in this chapter, Erikson (1981, p. 323) spoke toward the end of his career about pursuing existential and spiritual goals described in words like "liberation" and

"salvation" that are arguably "higher" than Jahoda-style positive mental health. By contrast, the Advaita Vedanta system did not develop either in the context of clinical practice or in the modem academic setting; it was developed by and for persons aiming at liberation or "salvation" somewhat similar to what Erikson mentioned in his later writings.

Regardless of such differences, one can nevertheless speak of similarities between the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedanta systems to the extent that they aim toward self-transformation through insights into the nature of selfhood. Thus, Erikson (1975) speaks of "truly transforming scientific and therapeutic orientation created by Freud ... based on a radical change in the concept of the role and self-perception of the healer as well as of the patient." The goal of this therapeutic orientation, he suggests, is to "free a person from inner bondage—namely, the conscious acceptance of certain truths about himself and other" (p. 23). The Advaita Vedānta, too aims at freeing *(mukti)* a person from an inner bondage *(bandha)* that ties a person to the chain of the consequences of his or her own past thought and action, and it tries to reach this goal through the conscious acceptance of certain truths about the nature of the Self. Moreover, both the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic approaches aim to liberate a person from narrow egotism and fill him or her with love for entire humanity. As long as we keep in mind the differences in their contexts, goals, and methods and are also mindful of the specific ways in which their approaches resemble each other, we should be able to avoid spurious comparisons.

Theories of Personality: A Common Meeting Ground for the Advaita Vedāntic and Eriksonian Perspectives

It is a part of current convention in contemporary psychology to consider the Eriksonian approach to personhood as one of the prominent theories of personality. At the same time, it is equally conventional to consider Advaita Vedanta as a system of Indian philosophy. If we go beyond these conventions and look at the content of the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic approaches, we can think of both as alternative conceptual models that account for the nature of the human individual. To put it differently, the traditional system of the Advaita Vedanta contains almost everything necessary to be called a theory of personality according to the prevailing standards of contemporary psychology. To understand what I mean thereby, it is necessary to examine what is generally meant by "a theory of personality" in the contemporary psychological discourse and how the meaning evolved over the past few decades.

It is important to note that, unlike systems of Western philosophy and the *darśanas* of Indian thought, theory of personality is a relatively new field of studies even within the relatively short history of modern psychology. Its historical roots as a distinct field of study may be attributed to the publication in 1957 of Hall

and Lindzey's popular textbook, *Theories of Personality*. This text helped start undergraduate courses in theories of personality and became influential in training a whole generation of psychologists in America as well as in many other countries. In their book, Hall and Lindzey (1957, pp. 1–2) state at the outset that a comprehensive overview of personality must begin with "conceptions of man *[sic]*" advanced by great thinkers of the past: Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Machiavelli, and the like. However, given the enormity of the task of studying such great thinkers throughout history, they decided to limit their scope to the "past six or seven decades," starting their account with Freud's approach. In the subsequent editions of their text, Hall and Lindzey (1970, 1978) dropped some theories included in the previous editions and included others. In the preface of each edition, they express their dilemma as to which ones should be included from among the many eligible candidates.

It is interesting to note that in the third (1978) edition of their text, Hall and Lindzey included a chapter on "Eastern personality theory," by which they meant a summary of the ancient Abhidhamma Buddhist perspective prepared for the book by Daniel Goleman. Such expansion of the historical and geographical horizons is not unique to Hall and Lindzey; a competing text by Fadiman and Frager (1976), for instance, had already included non-Western perspectives on personal growth from the Yogic, Zen, and Sufi traditions. Such turning to the East in the field of personality studies may be seen as part of a wave of interest in Eastern spirituality and art in America during the Vietnam War era. The reason to view such interest in the East as a "wave" is that, although Fadiman and Frager's later edition (1994) continues to cover theories of Eastern origin, a later version of Hall and Lindzey does not even mention Buddhism or Yoga (see Hall, Lindzey, Loehlin, & Manosevitz, 1985).[2] Although a majority of North American texts of theories of personality continue to manifest presentist and Eurocentric biases, the Hall and Lindzey and Fadiman and Frager texts have helped recognize traditional non-Western perspectives on a par with contemporary Western theories of personality.

In the field of the theories of personality, there is little discussion of, let alone agreement on, the criteria for recognizing a certain perspective as a legitimate theory of personality. There is no set formula specifying what issues a theory of personality must cover or on how they should be dealt with. No author seems to fabricate a theory to fit such specifications. Textbook authors often select particular perspectives or authors without explaining their criteria for selection; they anoint specific theories by including them in one edition of their text and depose others without much of an explanation for doing so. Ironically, in order to be recognized as a personality theorist, an author need not speak of something called personality; indeed, B. F. Skinner, the staunchest opponent of the concepts of person and personality, is widely recognized as a personality theorist. Nevertheless, there seems to be some method in this apparent madness. The key point that makes

sense, it seems to me, is Hall and Lindzey's expression that theories of personality are basically "conceptions of man *[sic]*" (1957, p. 1). What seems to matter the most is whether or not a given perspective appeals to a textbook author as a distinctive viewpoint about issues that matter to him or her. Regardless of the differing definitions of personality, sets of ideas that have come to be recognized as theories of personality are basically conceptual models that account for the nature of individual human beings. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1995a, 1998), many contemporary theories of personality in fact deal with personality only as a matter of individual differences, ignoring personhood as a matter of individuals being held responsible for their actions. Yet, there is no fixed boundary between the connotations of the terms *person* and *personality,* and the term, *theories of personality,* as currently used has a broad enough connotation to accommodate the concerns of both personhood and personality. For the purpose of the present work, the focus is on issues of personhood and not on personality as explained in the previous chapter.

In principle, there is no limit to the number of personality theories that already exist somewhere on this planet or those that might appear in the future. It is commonly accepted in psychology today that each individual tends to construct his or her own implicit personality theory- a set of usually implicit assumptions regarding why people behave the way they do (see Schneider, 1973, for a review of the extensive literature on this topic). Implicit theories of personality serve to inform our understanding of our own and others' behavior and to guide our daily interaction with others. As noted in Chapter 1, the cognitive constructionist perspective suggests that it is natural for human beings to construct and continually revise their own views of the world and of themselves within its context. An implicit personality theory is simply part of an individual's ongoing cognitive construction. As social constructionists have repeatedly pointed out, communities tend to share constructions of reality that help guide their collective life; the Christian, Buddhist, Marxist, Freudian, and other such views of human nature are instances of constructions shared widely in different cultures. Further, the principle of constructive alternativism suggests that it is always possible to construct an unlimited number of alternative perspectives that offer differing interpretations of the same set of phenomena. This does not mean, of course, that any construction of human nature will be valid, workable, or fit the bill as a theory of personality. Given the lack of consensus or clarity on criteria for the acceptability of a given perspective as a theory of personality, let me suggest a few criteria of my own in view of considering the Eriksonian and Advaitic views within the framework that we might call theories of personality.

If a theory of personality is to be recognized as such, it must obviously be *explicit,* for no implicit theory can be recognized, studied, or applied, no matter how rich or effective it might be. Also, a theory must be reasonably *comprehensive;* theories that account for only selected aspects of persons without attempting to

cover the whole person in some way or another cannot qualify as theories of personality. The fact that Piagetian theory is well recognized as a theory of cognitive development but not as a theory of personality illustrates the need for comprehensiveness. By comparison, Erikson's theory counts as not only a theory of human development but also as a theory of personality owing to its comprehensiveness. Views of human nature that we find in major literary works such as Shakespeare's plays or the epic Mahabharata are comprehensive as well as rich, complex, and highly insightful. Yet they do not quality as theories of personality since they are not formally presented as such. It is of course possible to derive a formal statement of a theory based on a body of literature in which it is voiced. Indeed, this is just what most writers of textbooks of theories of personality do: they go through numerous writings of various promising authors and prepare summaries of the ideas in a format they consider appropriate for a theory of personality. The success of textbook writers such as Hall and Lindzey lies in their ability to produce systematic, coherent, concise, and authentic accounts of theories based on sets of writings. Someone like Goleman, who prepared for the third edition of Hall and Lindzey a summary of the Buddhist theory of personality based on Abhidhamma texts, must translate, summarize, and *interpret* the original ideas in the language, idiom, style, and thematic format considered appropriate for contemporary Western theories of personality. In addition to being stated in a formal way, the principal propositions and claims of a personality theory must be in principle *verifiable* or falsifiable in observation or experience. In addition, the theory should have at least potential *applications,* if not already existing applications with demonstrated efficacy. The most common applications of personality theories are therapeutic, by which I mean that they are effective ways of bringing about a change in a person from a less desirable to a more desirable condition. While some theories might focus on the removal of pathology, others might take an average or "normal" individual to higher levels of "positive mental health," accomplishment, fulfillment, happiness, self-actualization, self-realization, or other forms of desirable human condition (Coan 1977).

It is my contention that the Advaita Vedanta system offers a theory of personhood that satisfies all the criteria just suggested. Moreover, in an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1988), I have presented a brief but formal statement of a theory of personality derived from the principles of the Advaita Vedanta system. I have prepared this statement in the language, idiom, and format compatible with contemporary textbooks of theories of personality. Stated this way, the Advaita Vedanta approach to personhood is meaningfully comparable with the Eriksonian or other theories of personality. In the following pages of this chapter, I shall present the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedānta viewpoints in a format that, in my view, is compatible with contemporary theories of personality; however, in keeping with the topic of this volume, my focus will be on the concepts of person, self,

and identity and not on individual differences, conceptions of psychopathology, and other such topics that are usually included in common accounts of personality theories.

ERIK H. ERIKSON'S VIEWS OF PERSON, SELF, AND IDENTITY

Erikson's theory of personality and identity formation evolved over nearly half a century of his productive career. In addition to numerous publications of his own, many secondary sources, particularly short interpretive summaries of his theories in textbooks, are widely available. The purpose of the present summary is not simply to add to these plentiful sources; it is to provide a convenient basis for meaningful cross-cultural comparison of perspectives on person, self, and identity. As such, the following summary is selective; it is deliberately slanted to bring about contrasts as well as complementarites in the cross-cultural context. Readers familiar with Eriksonian model might wish to skip the summary and go straight on to the critique.

INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND OF ERIKSON'S THEORY[3]

Erik Erikson was born in Germany in 1902, and was trained as a psychoanalyst in Sigmund Freud's clinic by Freud's daughter Anna. Early in his career as a psychoanalyst, Erikson was deeply influenced by the psychoanalytic ego psychology of Anna Freud, Ernst Kris, Heinz Hartmann, R. M. Loewenstein, and others. The main point of departure of the ego psychology from the Freudian model was that they did not accept Freud's portrayal of the ego as perpetually involved in a conflict with the unruly id on one side and a repressive superego on the other. Hartmann (1939/1958) conceived of a "conflict-free sphere" of an autonomous ego empowered by the capacities for physical movement, perception, and memory. In one of his latest works, Erikson (1982) approvingly quotes Hartmann on this issue (p. 19), and recognizes an expanded sphere of the ego's autonomy by granting it the "capacity for accurate and conceptual interplay with the factual world" (p.76). The significance of these changes in the psychoanalytic movement is that Erikson would consider human beings as persons responsible for what they do, rather than treat them as helpless creatures determined by biological and social forces.

Erikson is widely recognized for developing a theory of psychosocial development that parallels Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Erikson (1982, p.76) makes it clear that he and Piaget were not only well aware of each other's work, but also that both saw no contradiction between their stagewise accounts of human development. In many of his works, Erikson credits several senior and

contemporary authors whose ideas helped shape his evolving perspective over the decades. Prominent among such influences are Henry Murray's personological approach and his emphasis on studying "life histories rather than case histories"; William James's work on the self as mentioned before; ethnographic observations of childhood in aboriginal peoples of America (with Scudder Mekeel); anthropological perspectives of Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others, leading to a cross-cultural outlook on a global scale; perspectives on history of such historians as R. G. Collingwood, whom he occasionally quotes; and some basic ideas in biology, such as C. H. Stockard's formulation of the concept of epigenesis and Kod Lorenz's idea of "ritualization," along with his ecological perspective in general. As a result of selective "borrowing" from such diverse sources, Erikson's theory offers an interdisciplinary perspective rarely matched in breadth and richness by competing theories of personality. Besides this, extensive clinical experience, combined with originality strong enough to ignore the fashionable demands for measurement and constricting methodology, have made Erikson's work quite unique in contemporary psychology. The fact that he has explicitly stated the foundational ideas makes it easy to see how his theory follows from its axiomatic assumptions.

Conceptual Foundations of Erikson's Perspective

Erikson (1968) beings his theorizing with the explicit statement of the following basic assumption: "Man is, at one and the same time, part of a somatic order of things, as well a personal and social one" (p. 289). The *somatic* order is said to involve the "body self" in which biological processes operate to bring about a hierarchical organization of organ systems. The *personal* order involves the sphere of the "psyche," where psychic processes organize individual experience to bring about "ego synthesis." In the third order, called the *polis* in earlier formulations and the *ethos* in later ones, communal processes were said to bring about a cultural organization of the interdependence of persons (Erikson, 1982, pp. 25–26). These orders are not supposed to be separate and mutually exclusive domains, but mutually interpenetrating spheres of a common reality (1982, pp. 88–90). Identities of persons are said to be "situated" in the three orders in which they live at all times (1975, p. 46), and processes therein are considered mutually complementary. The orderliness brought about in each component of reality is not expected to be perfect at all times; Erikson considers bodily *tension,* individual *anxiety,* and social panic as indicators of the failure in bringing about order in the three spheres. It is my impression that, from the Eriksonian point of view, to think of human beings is to think of them in terms of the three "orders"; it is as if each person is simultaneously, necessarily, and always part of three levels of reality, and that consideration of a person is incomplete without an account of any of the three.

As a psychoanalyst Erikson takes for granted the Freudian trilogy of the id,

ego, and superego, and also accepts many basic principles ofthe Freudian theory, such as the stages ofpsychosexual development, the importance ofrepression and other defense mechanisms of the ego, the pervasiveness of anxiety in the human condition, and the role ofthe Oedipus complex in character formation, to mention a few. Like many other neo-Freudians, Erikson tries to advance the Freudian model so as to systematically include the *social* aspects ofpersonality. However, unlike some other neo-Freudians, he does not wish to gratuitously include the social aspects in his account; Erikson treats them as central. Erikson's main task was to extend the Freudian model of psychosexual development to a psychosocial one, and to cover the complete life cycle rather than limiting it up to the development of genitality at adolescence. The basic concept on which he bases his developmental model is the biological principle of *epigenesis*. This principle, derived from embryological studies, suggests that the development ofthe fetal organs proceeds by progressive differentiation of body tissues, such that particular organs (heart, lungs, eyes, etc.) arise stage by stage according to a predetermined plan specific to the species. At each stage new structures arise under critical conditions of optimum readiness ofthe internal and external factors. Since specific structures such as the arteries and veins must already be in place for the functioning of new ones like the heart, a delay or deficiency in the previous stage often disrupts the coordinated growth of other parts, and adversely affects the healthy growth of the organism as a whole.

Although the biological principle of epigenesis deals primarily with the development of organs in the uterus, Erikson extends this principle, by analogy, to suggest a stage-by-stage maturation of physical, cognitive, and social capacities during childhood and of overall personality development throughout the life cycle. Thus, the maturational processes lead to the development of sensory and motor capacitites according to a sequential plan, so that the individual becomes ready to become aware of, to be driven toward, and to interact with a social sphere of widening radius, starting from the "mothering" individual in early infancy and extending to humanity by adolescence (Erikson, 1959, p. 52). On the basis of cross-cultural observations. Erikson suggests that societies tend to develop patterns of customs that invite and encourage the developing capacities in a matching sequence. Thus, for instance, different cultures have developed differing customs such as toilet training practices and rites of passage to adulthood that roughly match nature's timetable for the maturation of capacities to control eliminative functions and to procreate, and so on. Social customs connected with the human life cycle typically present growing individuals with sets of "developmental tasks" appropriate to various stages. As pointed out by David Rapaport (1959, p. 15), the theory conceives of the sequence of epigenetic phases as universal, although the typical developmental tasks and their solutions differ from culture to culture. While the successful completion of such tasks contributes to the vitality and health of the person, lack of success results in a deficiency.

The Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development

The particular number of stages of human development proposed in the Eriksonian model may not be seen as sacred or absolute, but one that offers a convenient division of the life cycle into what are suggested as the most important aspects of the human life cycle. Indeed, Erikson has always presented his ideas as evolving and open to change from the beginning to its latest formulation. Each stage is viewed as a *critical period* or a turning point crucial for the development of particular aspects of personality within an "average expectable environment." Although specific environmental supports are important for the healthy growth at each stage, it is possible for alternate supports available during the same period to compensate for a missing crucial support- a surrogate for an absentee mother in the first stage, for instance. In addition to such contemporaneous or "horizontal" compensation, it is considered possible for there to be a later or "longitudinal" compensation for deficits in an earlier stage.

Depending on his or her relative success in accomplishing the stage-specific developmental tasks, a growing individual may develop a *sense* of (1) trust versus mistrust, (2) autonomy versus shame, (3) initiative versus guilt, (4) industry versus inferiority, (5) identity versus role confusion, (6) intimacy versus isolation, (7) generativity versus stagnation, and (8) integrity versus despair. The sense of trust, autonomy, and so forth involves largely preconscious and pervasive *attitudes,* which manifest in experience and in behavior. The terms characterizing the outcome in all stages are bipolar, suggesting the mutually oppositional or dialectical nature of the processes involved. However, the outcome at each stage is not an either/or affair. Although the poles mentioned in the second place in the eight pairs of terms imply negative outcomes, they are not necessarily undesirable. Indeed, certain degrees of mistrust, shame, guilt, and so on are not only natural outcomes of development but also desirable. The lack of an ability to mistrust dangerous characters would make a person vulnerable, for instance, and the lack of shame and guilt would imply, respectively, shamelessness and psychopathy. Thus, one must have a sense of both trust and mistrust and so on; Erikson considers a *favorable ratio* of positive over negative senses to be the optimum condition for the growth of a healthy personality.

Stage 1: Basic Trust versus Mistrust

During this initial stage extending over the first year or two, the human infant is entirely dependent on the mother andor surrogate caregivers. Prior to birth, the offspring is physically a part of the mother, and the mutual symbiotic relation between the mother's and baby's bodies must undergo a gradual but radical transformation, leading to the eventual independence of the child. In Erikson's view, it is most important for us to recognize the mutuality of the mother–child relationship. Erikson (1982) traces the development of the "I" in the mutuality of

the recognition of the infant and the mother by face and by name; it is here that we must place the "dimmest affirmation of the ... polarity of the 'I' and 'Other' " (pp. 44–45). Indeed, it is difficult to describe the quality of self-awareness in this primal stage; Erikson (1982) characterizes it by terms like "numinous" and as having "the aura of a hallowed presence." "The numinous assures us, ever again," he says, "of *separateness transcended* and yet also of *distinctness confirmed,* and thus of the very basis of a sense of 'I' " (p. 45; emphasis original).

It should be obvious that according to Erikson, separateness and distinctness from the "other" is a prerequisite of selfhood. But given the symbiotic existence of the fetus as part and parcel of the mother's body throughout pregnancy, the emergence of separateness must be gradual, and it makes sense that the self-awareness in the newborn baby must be "dim" as Erikson suggests. A parallel observation in Piaget's work may be noted here to clarify the point. In *Construction of Reality in the Child,* Piaget (1954, p. 3) points out that, in the first weeks of life, the child's universe is not cut up into separate permanent objects external to the self. The baby must begin to differentiate the toy from his own hand holding it; he must realize that biting one or the other has very different consequences. Piaget's observations show that it is not until the second half of the first year that babies begin to actively search for missing objects such as a toy, a behavior that indicates their recognition of "object permanence," i.e., implicit awareness of the continued existence of objects. Piaget's studies show how the child "constructs" the notion of permanent objects in her or his world, including the recognition of one's own body as an entity separate from other objects, such as a toy held in her or his own hand. For Erikson, it is the recognition of persons and the emotional responses to them that are more crucial than the cognition of physical objects as studied by Piaget.

The sense of trust, which Erikson considers to be the most crucial developmental gain of the first 2 years of life, is described as the experience of "being at home" with the world and being prepared to count on people and be counted on in return by others. A favorable balance of trust over mistrust is expected to result from the quality of care by the mother or her surrogate rather than the quantity of food supplied. Providing timely help, such as food when the baby is hungry and diaper change when wet, creates in the infant a sense that she is in a safe place, a sense that lays the foundation of hope and leads to a religious faith or belief in the cosmic order. Insofar as the infant in the first year or so remains primarily a recipient of food and care, Erikson (1959) characterizes the selfhood as being implicitly crystallized on the notion: "I am what I am given" (p. 82).

Stage 2: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt

The second stage of development corresponds roughly to the second and third years of life. During this period the muscles of the child develop so as to enable the child to exercise control on the body's eliminative functions and to walk and run

with increasing ease. During this period, the society expects the child to be toilet trained, although the toilet training practices vary from culture to culture, as documented by numerous anthropological studies. A child who cannot control him- or herself is commonly made to feel ashamed by parents and other significant elders. Shaming is a common method of social control exercised in most societies of the world. It is a preliminary socialization device that attempts to instill self-control in the growing individual, and it makes sense that it should coincide with the timing of maturation of the musculature and the concomitant development of individual autonomy. It also makes sense that the awareness of guilt, which works as a signal for avoiding a proscribed action built-in at a deeper level than shame, is the next one to develop. Insofar as the sense of autonomy implies the beginning of willful action, Erikson (1959) recognizes will as a basic strength that develops during the stage, and characterizes the selfhood implicit at this level in the words, "I am what I will" (p. 82).

Stage 3: Initiative versus Guilt

The third stage in the Eriksonian model corresponds with the preschool years. It is marked by the development of cognitive capacities, the use of language, and imagination. Children at this age develop a keen interest in play and naturally engage in make-believe. They begin to recognize the repetitive actions of men and women in uniforms - the mail carriers, firemen, nurses, and so on -and often imitate their visibly routine activities in make-believe. Following G. H. Mead, Erikson recognizes the recognition and anticipation of social roles as an important aspect of socialization of children at this stage. During this stage the self begins to develop by way of a temporary identification in imagination and play with a variety of social roles in their rudimentary forms. The growing capacity for imagination reflects children's interest in stories. Most societies tend to capitalize on this interest in conveying their cultural ideals by telling stories of their heroes and demons, the good guys and the bad guys.

The exposure to cultural ideals through stones also coincides with the learning of do's and don'ts in daily behavior. The child must now refrain from taking away or "stealing" toys belonging to other children, must not cheat, and must face increasingly strong punishments for breaking the more important rules of conduct. The child's social sphere is now broadened to include the father, the traditional disciplinarian in many societies, thus creating the Oedipal situation of classical psychoanalysis. Erikson accepts much of the Freudian account of the Oedipus complex, which need not be repeated here. Suffice it to note that, from a developmental perspective, selfhood at this stage is characterized in terms of the emergence of the ego-ideal and conscience, which together constitute the super-ego. Involved in the process is the *identification* of the child with the image of the parent of the same sex. Identification implies investing the same-sex parent with libidinal energy or strong positive *affect.* According to Erikson, it is such

childhood identifications that form the basis of the sense of identity that emerges in adolescence. As far as the preschool child is concerned, the maturation of the child's capacity for imagination allows for the developing personality to crystallize around an implicit conviction that "I am what I can imagine I will be" (Erikson, 1959, p. 82). At any rate, the preschool child has acquired much more than the mere physical autonomy characteristic of the previous stage. "[H]e is in the free possession of a certain surplus energy to forget failures quickly and to approach what seems desirable (even if it also feels dangerous) with undiminished and better aimed effort" (Erikson, 1959, p. 75). Thus, children at this stage manifest a sense of initiative of their own. But this is also the time for the society to ensure that all the bubbling energy be channeled according to its norms. The sense of initiative must therefore by balanced by an appropriate sense of guilt that would arise if and when the moral code is violated, or else we would have a misdirected member of the society to contend with. Thus, the child must acquire both a sense of initiative as well as a sense of guilt.

Stage 4: Industry versus Inferiority

Stage 4 in the Eriksonian model corresponds with the school years prior to puberty. According to Freud, this is the period of *latency* in psychosexual development - a temporary lull in the development of the sexual urge - which comes after the initial expression of sexual development in the form of interest in genitals and their manipulation during the Oedipal stage and prior to the hormonal changes of puberty. According to Erikson, the latency period allows for the diversion of libidinal energy from sexuality so as to enable the child to concentrate on learning at school. While the literate societies expect the schoolage children to master reading, writing, and arithmetic, the nonliterate societies teach the rudiments of technology that the child would need to survive in the ecological niche of the tribe. In any case, all societies must ensure that during childhood, each member must prepare to participate in its world of work and fulfill his or her economic function. With its typical emphasis on social factors, the Eriksonian model emphasizes that the child must learn to work together with others and work well. Each society tends to set up its own reward structures to encourage good work, and children ostensibly get recognition commensurate with the quality of their work. Such recognition forms the basis for the sense of industry, which is the significant developmental gain of this stage. The lack of adequate performance and/or recognition would lead to a sense of inferiority, and a consequent lack of adequate self-esteem.

Stage 5: Identity versus Role Confusion

This is the stage that Erikson has described in greater detail than any other stage in his model, and it will also be the most important for our purpose, owing to

our focus on the identity issue. It is important to remember that Erikson's model conceives of the person as simultaneously being part of three orders: the biological, the psychological, and the social. Working within this framework, Erikson characterizes the psychological account of the fifth stage of development in terms of the experience and behavior of individuals as they try to cope with the profound biological changes of puberty on the one hand and the social transformation of the dependent child into an independent adult on the other. When the social aspect of adolescent development is viewed in the cross-cultural context, it is recognized that there is a great degree of variation in the patterns of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood in different cultures. In the so-called "primitive" cultures where the technology is not very advanced, there are only a few occupational categories and little if any choice of alternative lifestyles. Children are usually trained in traditional crafts within the family by the time they reach puberty, and boys and girls are ready to become full-fledged "adults" - meaning *persons* with rights and responsibilities to work, get married, and procreate just like their elders. In such societies, it is common to hold rites of passage at puberty or very soon thereafter to announce and celebrate the youths' entry into the adult world. With the advancement of technology, occupational categories are multiplied, the period of training is prolonged well beyond pubertal age, and childlike dependence on parents increases as a result, and a new stage of development, which we call "adolescence," originates as a wedge between two equally ambiguously defined stages called "childhood" and "adulthood." Erikson conceives of a set of developmental tasks characteristic of this middle stage of life in the relatively complex societies of our time.

The typical major developmental tasks[4] of the fifth stage of the Eriksonian model are: coping with pubertal changes in the body and the resulting strong sexual drive; finding companion(s) in love and/or marriage; choosing a career that is both feasible and yet challenging, and is consistent with one's favored capacities on the one hand and with available opportunities on the other; acquiring training in line with one's chosen career path; finding a "meaning" in life, either by uncritically accepting parental values or by choosing from the variety of ideologies, beliefs, and values to which one has been exposed; finding a "niche" in society that is consistent with one's predilections, and doing so with or without the support of parents and other significant elders. To put it briefly, the main challenge of late adolescence and early adulthood is developing a satisfactory *psychosocial self-definition.* This does not of course mean that one has to generate a new selfhood all at once; the vaguely defined period of adolescence, relatively short or long depending on the social and individual circumstances, is to be used to fabricate an enduring sense of selfhood or psychosocial identity with the help of several elements accumulated throughout the preadolescent period. Among such accrued elements we may count the following: a name assigned and place of belonging ascribed by the family in which one was born and raised; self-images generally fashioned after the same-sex parent and other significant adults; strong feelings of

identification with such images; occupational roles recognized and crudely imitated in childhood play; and so on. Indeed, Erikson (1959) points out that the roots of the development of selfhood, which he characterizes as the process of *identity formtion,* "go back all the way to the first self-recognition: in the baby's earliest of smiles" (p. 113). Moreover, he says that "While the end of adolescence ... is the stage of identity *crisis,* identity *formation* neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is a lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society" (p. 113; emphasis original).

If identity formation is a lifelong process, why does adolescence prove to be its critical turning point? This is because the child can no longer feel sure about the "tentative crystallizations" of selfhood, which fall "prey to the discontinuities of psychosocial development" (Erikson, 1959, p. 114). Some of the discontinuities might be imposed internally, i.e., by biological processes of maturation leading to "changes in quality and quantity of drive" and "expansions in mental equipment" (1959, p. 115). Other discontinuities may be imposed by external factors, such as new and conflicting social expectations. In support of this point, Erikson refers to a seminal paper by the anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1938). In it she points out that while customs in some cultures allow a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood, others impose an abrupt transition, for example, by having to learn strong inhibition of sexual urges prior to marriage and then by expecting their full expression on the first night of the honeymoon. To put the point in the light of our discussion of the concept of identity in the last chapter, it is rapid and radical change threatening an inner sense of selfsameness that makes adolescence a critical period in identity formation.

The growth and transition during adolescence also brings about an enrichment and diversity in the internal and external environment, thereby threatening the individual's sense of unity. The inner world of the adolescent includes sexual drives of a newer quality and greater strength than ever before, fully grown muscular strength and intellectual capacities, the capacity to better understand ideas, a great diversity of lifestyles recognized in the surrounding society, new roles available and corresponding selves anticipated, and so on. One cannot just keep on adding new elements to one's sense of the self: many old elements, such as childhood dreams, need to be discarded; selves, such as "mommy's little boy," must be abandoned; and new elements must be meaningfully integrated into a single functioning whole. To put it in terms of the concept of identity discussed in the previous chapter, what Erikson means by identity is the maintenance of unity among the multiplicity of selves, and a sense of sameness in the midst of inner and outer change. How is the unification of multiple selves and a sense of sameness attained? Erikson ascribes the attainment of unity and sameness to the "synthetic function of the ego," a concept traced back to the work of the psychoanalyst H. Nunberg (1931). Says Erikson (1968): "The ego, if understood as a central and partially unconscious organizing agency, must at any given stage of life deal with

a changing Self which demands to be synthesized with abandoned and anticipated selves" (p. 211).

The unification of self-images and other contents of the psyche from within is not enough for successful identity formation; in addition to being integrated from within, the individual as a unit must be integrated into the social order of his or her community. During late adolescence, when young persons are about to step out of the sanctuary of parental protection into the world of work and the community at large, they are keen to find a niche in some section of the society, "a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made" for themselves. "In finding it," says Erikson (1959), "the young adult gains an assured sense of inner continuity and social sameness which will bridge what he was as a child and what he is about to become, and will reconcile his conception of himself and his community's recognition of him.... [S]uch recognition provides an entirely indispensable support to the ego in the specific tasks of adolescing ,.." (p. 111). The adults who recognize the youth's potential may be parents, teachers, employers, or community leaders, and may "recognize" him or her by either actually granting a suitable position in the occupational or community structure, or by merely offering their blessings. In the highly complex societies of our times, the world that the youth are ready to enter offers a bewilderingly wide array of alternatives in terms of occupation, sexuality, religion, ideology, and lifestyles. That does not mean that young persons are absolutely free to become whatever they want; the degrees of freedom vary greatly from society to society, depending on factors such as race, class, gender, economic conditions, current social policies, and so on. Writing against the backdrop of the American society, the Erikson suggests that the development of a healthy personality depends on "a certain degree of *choice,* a certain hope for an individual *chance,* and a certain conviction in freedom of *self-determination"* (1959, p. 93). He also suggests that the process of identity formation becomes problematic as the diversity and range of possibilities increase (see Erikson, 1963/1965,p. 13).

There are several intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional factors that Erikson identifies as important for the identity formation process. One of the important intrapersonal factors he emphasizes is the cognitive development during the middle teens. In this context he refers explicitly to Jean Piaget's account of the achievement of "formal operations," whereby "the youth can operate on hypothetical propositions, can think of possible variables and potential relations, and think of them in thought alone, independent of concrete checks previously necessary" (Erikson, 1968, p. 245). The relevance of this level of cognitive ability for the identity formation process is that the youth can "conjure up systematically the full range of alternative possibilities that could exist at any given time" (1968, p. 245).5 This means that those adolescents who do in fact develop the full capabilities of formal operations (and we know that not all do) can imaginatively link their present with a hypothetical future they construe or "conjure up" for

themselves.[6] But the path from the present to the future cannot be chalked out alone and without a meaningful perspective on the future. This is where the role of ideologies enters in the identity formation process. Institutionalized ideologies, as organized sets of collectively shared beliefs and values, provide valuable support for budding identities in a number of different ways.

The primary function of an ideology is to provide a coherent perspective on life, of the world around and of one's place within it (Erikson, 1959, pp. 156–159; 1968, pp. 187–188). This is true of most forms of ideology, whether explicit or implicit, ambitious or cynical, religious or political, whether borrowed like a "package deal" from a particular book, leader, or institute, or assembled from individually chosen elements and forged into a unique configuration. At an intrapsychic level, an ideology provides a valuable aid to what Erikson calls "ego synthesis," meaning, in particular, the integration of perspectives on the past and future selves. This is because ideologies tend to provide a set of values and to help in ordering priorities and fashion a hierarchy of roles, so that one is not pulled in different directions by conflicting role demands. Also, the ideological leaders often provide a valuable interpersonal link between the individual and the community at large. In some cases, a leader serves as a father figure, thus assisting in resolving deep-seated Oedipal conflicts during a period in which the young person is growing out of the confines of the family of origin and is struggling to come to terms with his relationship with authority[7]. The leaders, in turn, may fulfill their own needs for nurturing the younger generation during the late adult stage of their life cycle.

As a shared set of values and goals, ideologies provide the most significant link between the individual and the group. While individuals derive a sense of belongingness, solidarity, and collective security by identifying themselves with the group's ideology, the groups, in turn, harness the individual's constructive and destructive capacities in the service of collective goals. Ideologies also offer perspectives on a collective future, whether conceived of as a utopia on earth, a kingdom in heaven, or an Armageddon. Such visions of the future, even the misguided or delusional ones, provide individuals with a perspective on an uncharted future and a structured life plan. A course of action based on a promised collective future tends to provide a sense of durability when facing changes of the type that may have challenged the adolescent's sense of selfsameness. Before launching a course of action, the youth must feel that it is worthy of wagering the whole of his or her life, and an ideology provides a justification for a plan of action and ensures the youth's fidelity to the cause (Erikson, 1963/1965).

If a youth is to offer her or his very best for a cause and be ready either to toil in anonymity for life or to die as a martyr in a moment, then it better be the best cause possible, for nobody would want to waste her or his energies for a worthless cause. And there is usually no shortage of groups and leaders ready to convince potential followers that theirs is the best cause to live or die for. Erikson has

repeatedly noted in his writings that humanity is divided into innumerable segments, each claiming to pursue the greatest cause of earth. He has coined the term *pseudospeciation* to designate the division of humankind into separate species, as it were, each claiming to be a special kind—whether by virtue of past glory, some God-given privilege, or moral superiority by virtue of following the most justifiable cause imaginable. Some members of the pseudospecies tend to embrace totalistic ideologies that simplistically define good and bad in black-and-white terms, and divide communities sharply between defenders of the faith versus their enemies who fit to be annihilated like a species of prey destroyed by its natural predators. Adolescents who have just begun to recognize the moral relativity by virtue of their newly acquired cognitive capacity for "formal operations" sometimes feel overwhelmed by the task of having to choose among a large variety of competing conceptions of value. For such adolescents, totalistic ideologies offer a quick solution by sharply defining good and bad and by promising rewards either in the form of an ultimate victory or else the glory of martyrdom. We shall return to the cognitive implications of totalism in Chapter 4, on self-as-knower. Here, let us simply note that ideologies, whether totalistic or tolerant, explicit or implicit, assist in the central task of adolescence, namely, the attainment of a satisfactory psychosocial self-definition. Indeed, Erikson (1959) sees the role of ideology to be so important in identity formation that he considers identity and ideology to be "two aspects of the same process" (p. 157).

To be able to attain a satisfactory self-definition, a young person must make "a series of ever-narrowing selections of personal, occupational, sexual, and ideological *commitments*" (Erikson, 1963/1965, p. 13, emphasis added). Obviously, such a task requires time, and it is quite common for many people to explore several alternatives before arriving at lifelong commitments. In many instances, the initial choices are often accompanied by such strong feelings of sincerity and purpose that choices appear irreversible. However, what is accepted initially as a commitment for life turns out in the long run to be tentative. Many a youth adopts values, roles, relationships, and lifestyles so as to try them on for size, so to speak, i.e., with an implicit spirit of "free role experimentation." Often such experimentation is undertaken with a playful provocativeness - deliberately choosing what parents and other significant adults might dislike or prohibit. The adults, on the other hand, often tend to be permissive despite verbally denouncing the youths' undertakings. Indeed, the adult society tends to not only allow the young person to postpone typical "adult commitments," such as getting married or settling in a career, but directly or indirectly provides support for the prolongation of the stage of "adolescence." Erikson has used the term *psychosocial moratorium* to designate situations where the society tends to permit the prolongation of adolescence through free role experimentation on the part of the youth. With the help of such a moratorium, the growing individual is able to develop a "sense of identity."

The concepts of *identify* and *identityformation* are at the core of Erikson's

theory of personality. However, he does not give a precise definition of the term identity. Instead, he attempts to "make the subject matter of identity more explicit by approaching it from a variety of angles - biographic, pathographic, and theoretical; and by letting the term identity speak for itself in a number of connotations" (Erikson, 1959, p. 102). Having said this, Erikson goes on to assign the term identity a set of related connotations such as a "conscious sense of *individual identity,*" "striving for a *continuity ofpersonal character,*" "a criterion for the silent doings of ego synthesis," and finally, "maintenance of an inner *solidarity* with a group's ideals and identity" (1959, p. 102; emphasis original). Of the process of identity formation, he provides the following account:

> From a genetic point of view ., . the process of identity formation emerges as an *evolving configuration*-a configuration which is gradually established by successive ego syntheses and resyntheses throughout childhood; it is a configuration gradually integrating *constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles.* (Erikson, 1959, p. 116; emphasis original)

It is best to describe the concept of sense of identity, which describes the gains that accrue to an individual upon completion of the stage-specific tasks of adolescence, in Erikson's own words:

> An increasing sense of identity ... is experienced preconsciously as a sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home with one's body, a sense of "knowing where one is going," and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count. Such a sense of identity, however, is never gained nor maintained once and for all. Like a "good conscience," it is constantly lost and regained, although more lasting and more economical methods of maintenance and restoration are evolved and fortified in late adolescence. (Erikson, 1959, p. 118)

To put it differently, the successful completion of the developmental tasks of adolescence should lead to the crystallization of one's selfhood such that the youth could say with confidence, "This is where I belong," or "I am what I stand for."

As can be expected, individuals differ greatly in the ways in which they meet the challenges of youth, in the degree of success they attain, and the amount of time taken to complete the tasks. Some individuals express great difficulties in arriving at a satisfactory sense of identity and experience its antithesis, a condition that Erikson has labeled *role confusion.* In extreme instances, the difficulties in accomplishing a sense of identity manifest in the form of a variety of relatively mild or severe symptoms such as: inability to concentrate on work at hand; inability to derive a sense of efficacy, often despite success in doing what one is expected to do; difficulty in starting or finishing work on time, and a general difficulty in coping with time; a feeling that life is just happening to oneself, rather than being lived by one's own initiative; "fluctuations in ego-strength," meaning occasionally feeling great, while sometimes feeling worthless; and "work paralysis," meaning sheer inability to get anything accomplished and feeling that life

has come to a standstill. A condition involving several such symptoms has been called the state of *identity crisis*. Erikson has offered a composite sketch of the state of identity crisis on the basis of his observations of a number of borderline cases encountered in his clinical practice and a number of biographical and autobiographical accounts. He has noted that it is extremely rare to find an ensemble of most of the typical symptoms described above in a single case. He also has warned that, despite its apparent similarity with a neurotic syndrome, identity crisis is not a "nosological category," i.e., a medical term designating a form of disease. It is not an affliction or a pathology leading to a wastage of energy, but is rather a "normative crisis," Le., a normal period of difficulty with heightened potential for growth, like the apparently pathological but normal period of teething in infancy, for instance.

Stage 6: Intimacy versus Isolation

As the years of adolescence pass, one arrives at adulthood with or without an adequate sense of identity. During early adulthood, most individuals' major concern shifts to the development and maintenance of intimate relationships in love and work. Being separate from others and yet together with them is a hallmark of identity. In intimate encounters and close companionships in love and work that are typical of early adult life, it is often difficult to maintain an optimum distance from the companion. Selfhood, as discovered, defined, and fortified by late adolescence, is now in danger of being fused with or lost in an intimate dyadic bond. The challenge one faces at this stage is therefore what and how much to give in, and what and how much to retain, as one's own and separate territory. According to the Eriksonian model, a favorable balance of the feeling of intimacy with partners in sex, friendship, and work over a sense of isolation from them marks the optimum condition in early adulthood.

Stage 7: Generativity versus Stagnation

During the middle period of adulthood, most individuals shift their major concern to the care of the next generation. It is not simply the chores involved in providing food, comforts, and schooling that matter during this stage; what matters most is the passing of a cultural legacy to the younger generation. In the context of the succession of generations that is critical for this stage, one tends to see oneself in relation to one's forebears on the one hand and one's successors on the other. One might try to assess whether, in comparison with what one received from parents and teachers, one has contributed something more worthwhile to one's children, students, or apprentices at work. If the assessment is positive, the result is a sense of generativity, it implies the satisfaction of having contributed one's fair share to the cultural legacy on behalf of the current generation. However,

if the assessment is negative, one might feel stagnation, implying that one has failed to improve upon the cultural legacy of previous generations. In my opinion, the sense of selfhood may be crystallized at this stage in saying: "I am what I have and care to pass on to the next generation."

Stage 8: Integrity versus Despair

The eighth and last stage in the Eriksonian model coincides with old age. It is the time for taking stock of the entire life cycle toward its completion. If I have accomplished becoming what I think I should have become, then I would have a sense of integrity; if not, I would feel a sense of despair. According to Erikson (1968), toward the end of life one's sense of identity might be expressed in the words, "I am what survives of me" (p. 141).

The Varied Critiques of Erikson's Theory

Over the nearly half century that Erikson's work evolved, his ideas gained wide popularity and attracted a multitude of followers as well as critics. There have been several attempts to examine, extend, test, as well as criticize various aspects of his work. It is neither necessary nor possible to explore and assess the varied developments inspired and critiques evoked by Erikson's writings on various related fields such as human development, psychohistory, and so on. However, it is necessary to indicate the kind of support as well as critiques that are relevant to the present context. One of the major concerns of contemporary psychology is whether his concept of identity and his theory of identity formation are empirically supported. Foremost in such research conducted over the years for empirically testing Erikson's ideas is the work of James Marcia (1966), who devised a method for the validation of the concept of ego identity status derived from Erikson's theory. It is not necessary to describe this methodology here. Suffice it to note that, with the help of numerous studies using this method in North America as well as in many other parts of the world, Marcia and his many students, colleagues, and others have compiled a considerable amount of data to test various hypotheses derived from Erikson's theory. On the basis of a review of such data, Marcia (1980) concludes that "[t]he utility of the concept of identity in looking at personality development in adolescence has been reasonably well established. It is a construct that can be fairly reliably measured, related to concurrent variables, and to antecedent and consequent conditions" (p. 181).

Marcia's claim has been carefully examined and criticized for various technical shortcomings as well as its overemphasis on the individual and the neglect of social factors (Côté and Levine, 1987). In response to such criticism, Waterman (1988) has defended Marcia's research methodology and the major findings based on it. Regardless of their shortcomings, studies of identity formation by Marcia and

his associates have demonstrated that Erikson's theory is a rich source of hypotheses that can be quantified and empirically tested. Whatever the level of empirical support lent to his theory by current research, as noted by Hall and Lindzey (1978), "[m]uch of what Erikson has written appears to have face validity, that is, it seems to ring true to the average reader" (p. 108). Erikson came to psychology from art, bringing esthetic quality as well as literary merit to his writing, for which he is widely admired. "But," says Ray Holland (1977), "Erikson the artist integrates and unifies his picture, and in the end it is, like many fine works of art, good, but not quite true" (p. 40). I, for one, would settle for the provisional judgment that Erikson's theory holds a promise of validity strong enough to be taken very seriously.

Aside from the descriptive aspects of Erikson's theory, which must be judged in terms of their validity, its prescriptive aspects are open to judgment in terms of a variety of values and ideological positions. His work has been criticized by several feminists (e.g., Millett, 1970/1990; Janeway, 1971) for its sexist bias. The feminist critics have noted, often in an approving tone, that Erikson recognizes not only the unfair treatment women have received in many societies, but also their potential to bring peace on earth. However, they find fault with his view that "anatomy is destiny." Attributing the origin of women's problems to nature rather than to social injustice makes the problems look impossible to correct, thereby diverting attention away from the efforts needed to remove the injustices. As to Erikson's views on many other matters, some authors have criticized Erikson for his conservatism and his support of the societal status quo (e.g., Roazen, 1976, p. 165), while others have taken him to task for being a revisionist and for siding with the radical youth of America (Gutmann, 1974). Such varied evaluations of Erikson's work follow from the critic's background, mandate, values, and purpose.

Erikson's Theory in the Cross-Cultural Context

As noted, Erikson's theory was founded on cross-cultural observations in varied contexts: his experience of living first in Europe and then in the United States, his acquaintance and collaboration with several anthropologists, his early work with American Indians, and his later work in India to study Mahatma Gandhi's life history. Erikson's openness to a variety of cultures stands in contrast with the majority of Western personality theorists, who rarely step beyond the boundaries of the Western civilization, and when they do, they try mainly to obtain data to fit their methodology rather than to start a dialogue with indigeous theories and expand their horizons. Hypotheses based on Eriksonian theory have been tested in a wide variety of cultures,[8] and the results suggest broad, if not universal, applicability of the Eriksonian theory to cultures around the world. Erikson's theory of identity formation has been applied in a wide variety of studies in India: in longitudinal as well as cross-sectional studies of college youth (Kakar

& Chowdhry, 1970; Paranjpe, 1975), in clinical work with youth (Ramanujam, 1979), in autobiographical accounts of upper- as well as lower-caste men (Paranjpe, 1975, Ch. 4; Thorat, 1979), investigations of identity issues among women (Paranjpe, 1975, pp. 201–217; Das, 1979), comparative case studies of identity issues in Indian and Japanese youth (Roland, 1988), and in Erikson's own well-known study of Mahatma Gandhi (Erikson, 1969). In my judgment, the upshot of all this work is that the basic concepts of psychosocial identity and identity crisis and the Eriksonian analysis of the process of identity formation are largely applicable to the Indian cultural context, except for details. The case history based on a young man's diaries over a 10-year period reported in my earlier work (Paranjpe, 1975, Ch. 4), in particular, shows that the process of youth's search for identity, the symptoms of identity crisis, and successful resolution of identity crisis by using role experimentation within a psychosocial moratorium match with Erikson's account so well that further questioning about the applicability of his theory becomes a matter of detail rather than of core concepts.

The details where the Eriksonian account of identity formation does not fit well with the Indian context include the following points: that there is no distinct state of adolescence in the Indian society; Indian youth are under greater pressure than Western youth to subordinate individual interests and opinions to those of family and social authorities; and the role of parents in raising children is different than in the West owing to greater influence of uncles and aunts and grandparents, which alters the significance of the Oedipal conflict for character formation. Given the results of its applications in India, Erikson's theory of identity formation holds high promise for wider cross-cultural relevance. Probably the process of identity formation is about the same everywhere, but supports and threats to that process differ from culture to culture and contribute to the alleviation or aggravation of an individual's passage through the life cycle.

Be that as it may, a special aspect of the application of Erikson's theory to the Indian culture is that it has been examined in the light of the traditional indigenous worldview of India by Sudhir Kakar (1979, 1981), who was one of his students, and also by Erikson (1979) himself. I think that such examination is an important aspect in the cross-cultural application of psychological theories; it fits within the Malinowskian dictum that it is important to view the world from the "natives' viewpoint," and it is conspicuously absent in contemporary cross-cultural studies. At any rate, both Kakar and Erikson emphasize (rightly, in my opinion) the relevance of the concepts of *dharma* and *karma* in examining the concept of identity in the context of the traditional Indian worldview. Erikson (1979) has made the following crucial observation in this connection:

> [T]he Hindu life spiral combines *dharma,* the law of the present life, with karma, the net balance of good and bad deeds in previous lives, and defines a person's identity as well as his adult goals as aspects of one inescapable truth which unifies rather than contrasts our earthly and our existential identities. (p. 16; emphasis original)

I have already introduced the concepts of *dharma* and *karma* in Chapter 2 in terms of their relevance to the traditional Indian concept of personhood. The fact that Erikson reflects on their relevance is a remarkable indication of the opening of cultural horizons for a psychological theory of Western origin, and prompts further steps in the same direction. In the remainder of this volume, I wish to build on the suggestive implications of Erikson's words quoted above and similar steps taken by Sudhir Kakar. My own inclination is to probe deeper into the ontological, epistemic, and axiological implications that would either ensure, delimit, or deny the convergence of the differing viewpoints. To be able to do so, it is necessary to examine the theoretical foundations of Erikson's work, which, in my opinion, are marked by two rather distinct phases of the development in his account of identity. The first phase is represented by a chapter called the "theoretical interlude" in a book published in the middle stage of his career (Erikson, 1968), and the second phase is reflected in a paper published over a decade later (1981). Let me briefly explain these two phases of his theoretical foundations, along with short interpretive commentaries on both.

Theoretical Interlude: The Earlier Phase

In *Identity, Youth and Crisis,* Erikson (1968) identifies the different concepts of various earlier authors that helped shape his own distinctive approach. "Identity in its vaguest sense suggests," he says, "much of what has been called the self by a variety of workers" (p. 208), specifically mentioning what G. H. Mead called the "self-concept," H. S. Sullivan's "self-system," and "fluctuating self-experience" described by the psychoanalysts P. Schilder and P. Federn. He also explains the connection he had tried to establish in his own work between cognitive and social psychological concepts like self-image and role on the one hand and the Freudian and ego psychoanalytical concepts of the ego-ideal and "ideologies of the super ego" on the other. More specifically, Erikson (1968, p. 209) points out that his work is concerned primarily with the "genetic continuity of such a self-representation, a continuity which must certainly be ascribed to the ego." While the Freudian ego-ideal implies the "ideals of the particular era as absorbed in childhood" (p. 210), his own concern, he says, is about the changing ideals and self-images throughout the life cycle. In this context, he ascribes to the ego the task of selecting, testing, and integrating self-images as they keep changing under the impact of inner and outer changes:

> While the imagery of the ego ideal could be said to represent a set of to-be-striven-for but forever not-quite-attainable ideal goals for the Self, ego identity could be said to be characterized by the actually attained but forever-to-be-revised sense of the reality of the Self within social reality. (Erikson, 1968, pp. 210–211)

It should be clear from the above that "ego identity" as conceptualized by Erikson is suggestive of continuity in the images of selfhood over a series of

continual changes induced in self-images, roles, as well as values and ideals under the impact of inner and outer pressures. How is the sense of continuity attained? It is attained by periodically assessing one's self-images and other elements of selfhood in the light of contemporary challenges (such as successes and failures, new information, opportunities, rewards, and the like), by selectively abandoning those that are no longer serviceable or appealing and by integrating the old and the new one into a renewed vision of selfhood. While a major renewal or this type of an overhaul is said to happen during the "psychosocial moratorium" of youth, Erikson suggested that the sense of identity continues to be revised throughout the life cycle. There is some research in developmental psychology (e.g., Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992) that shows how the process of continual revision and consolidation of the sense of identity continues throughout adulthood in alternating phases of exploration and commitment. According to Erikson (1959), "[t]he sense of ego identity ... is the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity (one's ego in a psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 89). It is important to note here that in Erikson's view, what supports the selfsameness felt by an individual by way of his or her "sense of identity" is primarily an "accrued confidence" in one's ability to convince oneself and significant others that, despite the changes in various aspects of one's self, one has somehow continued to be the same. As long as one can convince oneself - or rationalize- that one is the same person as before, it does not matter if one does not understand what-if anything, for that matter- has remained the same within oneself.

Essentially, Erikson's theory explains how most people cope with ongoing changes in their personhood and how they acquire and maintain a sense -or impression-of having been the same selves despite many obvious changes that take place willy-nilly in the course of life. Such understanding helps identify the more common pitfalls in the development and maintenance of a sense of identity, which in turn can be a basis for guidance, counseling, and therapeutic work. This is fine as far as it goes, but what does Erikson's theory offer in terms of the deeper meanings of self and identity raised in the previous chapter? In keeping with the strategy chosen earlier, the question may be rephrased as follows: *what* does Erikson's theory affirm in regard to self-sameness, on what *grounds,* and to what *consequence?*

In *Identity, Youth and Crisis,* Erikson (1968) insists that his focus is on psychosocial identity, indirectly suggesting that he is not interested in the philosophical questions associated with the concept of identity. Nevertheless, he provides some pointers regarding the deeper implications of his viewpoint. "[T]here is more to man's core than identity," says Erikson, "there is in fact in each individual an 'I,' an observing center of awareness and of volition, which can transcend and must survive the *psycho-social* identity which is our concern in this book" (p. 135). My main comment on this is that, in saying this, Erikson essentially follows the Kantian position insofar as (1) the term *transcend* typically suggests

the Kantian approach in the Western tradition as illustrated in James's usage of the expression the "transcendental ego"; (2) the term *center* is suggestive of the unchanging character attributed to the Kantian Pure Ego; and (3) given the focus on both the *observing* center of awareness and of *volition,* Erikson's approach echoes Kant's double-barreled notion of an unchanging self-as-knower combined with the "permanence of the agent" mentioned in the previous chapter.

If this interpretation is correct, then many of James's criticism of the Kantian position hold, *mutatis mutandis,* to Erikson's position as well. First, as in Kant's case, Erikson's position is also ambiguous, since it combines the center of awareness, presumably implying a passive element in the total equation of the whole enterprise of knowing, with an active agent. Second, while in Kant's case the Pure Ego is a mere logical postulate, and hence an unverifiable entity, Erikson's center of awareness is groundless, lacking support not only in the form of verification of any sort but even a single argument. Third, no consequences follow from affirming a center of awareness as suggested by Erikson, as is the case with Kant's postulation of the Pure Ego.

Theoretical Interlude: the Later Phase

What I have called the earlier phase in the development of Erikson's views was completed in 1968, which is about the time of his retirement. Several years later, he started to speak of how and why persons begin to relate to something that transcends their existence in time. The occasion was his "Jefferson Lectures in the Humanities" delivered in 1974, and the topic was the compilation of excerpts from the Bible by Jefferson (1743-1826), the third President of the United States, in his old age. According to Erikson (1974), this compilation

> bespeaks some awareness, on the part of an American president, of the fact that one pole of any identity, in any historical period, relates man to what is forever contemporary, namely, eternity ... [T]his pole of identity ... deals with the awareness of death. We all dimly feel that our transient historical identity is the only chance in all eternity to be alive as somebody in a here and now. We, therefore, dread the possibility, of which we are most aware when deeply young or very old, that at the end we may find that we have lived the wrong life or not really lived at all. This dread seems incomparably greater than death itself, after a fulfilled life—awful as the sudden cessation of life always is. (pp. 41–42)

In raising concerns over the possibility of encountering at the end of one's life the feeling of having "lived the wrong life," and by relating to "eternity," Erikson has raised the most profound existential issues reminiscent of the Upanisadic story of Naciketas mentioned before. In his own way, Erikson suggests two different ways in which individuals tend to cope with their yearning for eternity. One way is to die a heroic death while helping kill "those on 'the other side' who share ... another world view" (p. 42). Erikson labels this way of transcending mortality "kill and

survive." He contrasts this martyr's way of seeking immortality with the other, saintly way, which "emphasizes nothingness instead of somebodiness. It is 'not of this world,' and instead of a competition for the world's goods (including those securing the earthly identity), it seeks brotherhood in self-denial" (p. 42). "This way of identity is personified," says Erikson, "by the great religious leaders who in their own words represent the naked grandeur of the I that transcends all earthly identity in the name of Him who is I Am. The motto of this world view could be said to be 'die and become.' " (p. 43).

In a later article, "Galilean Saying and the Sense of 'I,' " Erikson (1981) explains the significance of the saintly way of transcending temporal identity with the example of Jesus and also connects it with the theoretical analysis of the "I" as a transcendental *center of awareness* explained in the earlier phase of his theorizing. In this later paper, he says: "The I, after all, is the ground for the simple verbal assurance that each person is a center of awareness in a universe of communicable experience, a center so numinous that it amounts to a sense of being alive, and more, of being the vital condition of existence" (p. 323; emphasis added). Elsewhere in the same paper he first suggests that "the sense of 'I' is the most obvious and the most elusive endowment of creatures with consciousness" (p. 323). Then he repeats many of the same words, saying that "the sense of *I* is one of the most obvious facts of existenc e- indeed, may be *the* most obvious- and ... the most elusive." In an attempt to shed light on this elusive phenomenon, he goes back to his intellectual ancestors, referring to himself as "a modem person and a psychoanalyst in the Judeo-Christian orbit" (p. 322).

One of the many intellectual ancestors to whom Erikson returns in this context is William James, and quotes the following words from his Psychology:

> The I, or "pure ego," is a very much more difficult subject of inquiry than the Me. It is that which at any moment is conscious, whereas the Me is only one of the things it is conscious of. In other words, it is the Thinker; and the question immediately comes up what is the thinker? (James, 1910, pp. 195–196; quoted in Erikson, 1981, p. 323)

It is interesting that in raising these questions Erikson goes back indirectly to Kant, and although he does not discuss any of Kant's "philosophical" notions, he nevertheless touches upon the metaphysical issue of *"what* is the thinker?" Throughout this paper, Erikson's (1981) approach shows a clear shift away from his earlier work, in which he focused on the struggles and trepidation of individuals studied through case histories, biographies, and autobiographies. In his later work (Erikson, 1981), he explores the meaning of the "I" in the sayings of Jesus during the phase of his life when he wandered on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. In his analysis of this historical instance, Erikson addresses some deeply existential and even theological concerns about the nature of the "I." Reflecting once again on the stagewise changes in selfhood analyzed in his research on the life cycle, he now clearly recognizes that "throughout all these critical stages with all their develop-

ment, there remains for the *I* a certain existential solitariness which ... we depict as seeking love, liberation, salvation" (p. 323). In trying to understand these issues he consults not only the work of the existential theologian Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976), but also the Bible itself, along with various studies in Biblical exegesis. Indeed, Erikson speaks in this paper like a Biblical scholar, offering his own interpretation of the light the Gospel throws on the nature of the "I."

Erikson explains that in his task of the interpretation of the ancient texts he was trying to follow the methodological guidelines of the "form critics" within the exegetic and hermeneutic tradition. Like the scholars of this tradition, he too was trying to bridge the historical gap between the ancient and the modem. This implies an attempt to make sense of what was said in a different sociohistorical context and with a different set of metaphors in the light of contemporary concerns, idioms, and metaphors. But unlike the existential theologians, he was not dealing with only theological issues, but also with some psychological ones. The sense of self, he says, "lies on the borderline of psychology and of theology" (p. 323). Moreover, as a developmental social psychologist, he began his exegetic exercise with a particular concern and a particular perspective in mind. My own understanding of Erikson's analysis of the Galilean sayings is that it reflects a significantly different phase of his theory of selfhood. Let me attempt an explanation.

In the earlier phase of his work, Erikson located the origins of the sense of Z in the mutual recognition of the baby and the mother in close dyadic interaction. Like Cooley before him, he saw the *self* and the *other* as born together, except that he considered the other as a counterplayer in an ongoing interpersonal exchange and the mother as the Primal Other. According to Erikson's theory, the growing child encounters a social sphere of successively widening radii, and the self develops through interaction in a series of pairs of *I* and *you.* This implies an expanding sphere of relations successively including the father, siblings, neighbors, peers, teachers, and so on. The growing child gradually becomes part of an increasing number of dyads and triads with a series of *he* and *she* with whom the he or she has close encounters. Eventually, the growing individual must encounter the multiple wes with which he or she feels identified and also with corresponding they and them, who the I learns to "repudiate or to exclude as foreign, if not nonhuman altogether" (Erikson, 1981, p. 331). As the individual grows, the boundaries of what the social psychologists call in-groups and out-groups keep changing with the vicissitudes of the individual's and the society's history, requiring relevant redefinition and realignment of the *I* with a variety of *we,* and *they.* Erikson calls the division of humanity into exclusive communities pseudospeciation, implying that humanity, instead of being united into a single species, is split into numerous pseudospecies that fight with each other like predator and prey. This conceptualization of pseudospeciation suggests Erikson's concern with the problem of worldwide conflict and war. This concern is particularly understandable if we remember that he is a member of the generation of 20th-century Europe that

witnessed two cataclysmic wars. Against this background, one of the things about the history of Palestine in the lifetime of Jesus that Erikson looks at with great concern is the way in which Jesus's society was divided and how Jesus dealt with those divisions.

Seeing it from the vantage point of such a concern, Erikson notes that during the time when Jesus wandered on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, the Jews of the Diaspora were deeply divided into several subgroups, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and the Zealots. During the period of Jesus's childhood, the Zealots had revolted against the Romans, and the violence had continued for decades, while at the same time "the Sadducees, a party of the priestly aristocracy ... shared the maintenance of a precarious Pax Romana with the occupying power" (Erikson, 1981, p. 341). Yet when Jesus went around preaching as a rabbi throughout Palestine, he spoke to ordinary men and women, healing the sick and helping the poor regardless of their background. Jesus not only gave a renewed sense of the we to his followers, he also gave a new perspective on how to properly orient themselves to all of *them*. This orientation is best expressed in Jesus's famous exhortation not to go "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but rather to turn the other cheek if the enemy strikes on the right, and to go on extra mile if forced to go one mile (Matthew, 5:38-41). In connection with Jesus's message of love for not only one's kith and kin, but even one's enemies, Erikson (1981, pp. 361–362) asks us to remember an insight derived from psychoanalysis: that the sense of I, if allowed to be suppressed by the tyrannical inner voice of the superego, tends to either repress the inner evil and be subject to a self-destructive self-hate, or "projects" it onto the "they" and sets out to destroy them.[9] Jesus taught us by his own example how to project the *best* in us on the *worst* enemy, a lesson followed in our times by Mahatma Gandhi.

In his paper on the Galilean sayings, Erikson (1981, p. 354) excerpts the whole text of the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), which illustrates God's welcome to the repentant sinner. The "parable's meaning, in its patriarchal and monotheistic setting," says Erikson, "is the father's overall parental care and above all his *forgiveness*" (p. 356; emphasis added). Tolerating the visibly differing lifestyles of alien cultures and forgiving transgressions of individuals within one's own communities seems easier to those who are prepared to focus on the inner self and to recognize their own shortcomings, rather than persistently focusing on others and finding fault with them. Erikson goes to great length in pointing out that Jesus asked his followers to look inward for sources of both sin as well as the Kingdom of God. "And if the Kingdom is so vague in its temporal boundaries, *where* is it?" asks Erikson (1981, p. 347; emphasis original). Then he quotes Jesus's words, "Behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21), insisting that Luther's translation "within you" correctly conveys the "authentic" meaning of Jesus's original words. One of the main outcomes of Erikson's exegetic exercise is his conclusion that "[i]n the Bible, the most direct

reference to the human *I* is in the form of an inner light, that is, of a luminosity of awareness" (p. 329). An implication of this is, I think, that when one realizes that the *I* resides at the center of awareness, one need not find the self in a we and be wedded to the group's boundaries. The self, as but a point at the center of awareness, has no boundaries. One who realizes the self's lack of boundaries should no longer feel identified with a group with sharp boundaries that excludes and rejects outsiders. If more and more people realize this, then division of humanity into pseudospecies should come to an end. But Erikson does no& actually say this; he seems to suggest as much when he turns away from his usual focus on the human sense of *I* to God's.

One of the questions Erikson (1981) tries to answer in his exegesis is: What is the meaning of "Moses's report that when he asked God for his name he received the answer: *'Iam thatIam'?''* (p. 324). In his search for an Answer, Erikson refers to Leif Boman who, he points out, "has noted that the word for 'being' ('hayah') ... is used in connection with Jehovah's very name," and that it "has a very active quality" (p. 336). Erikson infers from this "an identity of being, and becoming, and even of acting and speaking," and goes on to quote a saying from the Old Testament (Isaiah, 40:28) that describes God as "everlasting" and suggests that He is *everywhere.* The implication of this is, I think, that the selfsameness or permanence of the I is understood as derived from Being, which is everlasting and ubiquitous, and presumably also divine. But "the dominating quality of the deity," says Erikson, is "that of a pervasive spirit, out of bounds for any personal characterization," (1981, pp. 335-356), and hence expressed in an enigmatic form: "I am that I am." Erikson's references to "deity" and "pervasive spirit" in connection with the human "sense of I" give the impression that he is talking about some ineffable "mystical" experience. This impression is deepened by his references in the same essay to the well-known mystics, Lao Tse and Meister Eckhart.

This reference in Erikson's search for the nature of selfhood to the ideas of the German mystic Meister Eckhart (1260 –1327) brings us close to the perspective of the Advaita Vedanta, for Meister Eckhart's views have been recognized as being very similar indeed to those of the Indian scholar and Advaita Vedantist, Sankara (788–820) (see Otto, 1932). With this note, we shall turn to a discussion of the Advaita Vedantic views of person, self, and identity, and then turn to a comparison of the views of Erikson and Sankara

PERSON, SELF, AND IDENTITY ACCORDING TO ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

As noted in the previous chapter, Vedanta is one of the six major orthodox schools of Indian philosophical thought that accepts the authority of the ancient scriptural texts, the Vedas. The term Vedanta is suggestive of its focus on the *Upaniṣads,* philosophical treatises that originated toward the latest phase (prob-

ably 1500–600 BCE) of the long period in which the Vedic texts were composed. Despite the hotly debated controversies over their historical origins, it is generally believed that the teachings of the principal Upanisads (about a dozen in number) were known to Gautama Buddha (563–483 BCE), and elicited his unorthodox reactions. Parts of the orthodox systems such as Mīmāṁsā Vedānta, Sāṅkhya Yoga, Nyāya, and so on arose from an attempt to provide well-integrated theories based on the exegesis of the Upanisadic texts. The Vedantic interpretation was systematized in the form of a series of aphorisms by Bādarāyaṇa around the beginning ofthe Common Era, orpossibly earlier. Bādarāyaṇa's interpretation was in turn subject to many alternative interpretations. The most influential among them is the nondualist (Advaita) viewpoint of Śaṅkara (ca. 788–820CE).

Śaṅkara was an intellectual of the highest order. Within the short span of his life he wrote definitive critiques of (1) the principal Upaniṣads (Śaṅkara, 1964), (2) the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (Śaṅkara 1978), which is a most influential compendium of the systems of Indian thought, and (3) Bādarāyana's Vedānta aphorisms (Śaṅkara, 1980).[10] In addition to these major works, he also wrote several minor treatises on Vedanta, composed devotional poems, engaged many prominent scholars of his time in debates and defeated or won them to his side, and also established monasteries in the four comers ofthe Indian subcontinent. Śaṅkara's work is often compared with that of Aristotle in terms of the incisiveness of logic, breadth of scope, and degree of influence. His theories were elucidated, expanded and enriched by a long succession of highly capable scholars such as Sureśvara and Vācaspati Miśra (9th century), Sarvajñātman (10 century), Śriharṣa (12th century), Prakāśātman (13th century), Sāyaṇa Mādhava and Vidyāranya (14th century), Madhusūdana Appaya Diksita, and Dharmarāja (16th century), Abhyankar (20th century), and innumerable others. Śaṅkara's nondualist Vedānta is a rich and live tradition to which scholars have continued to contribute. Vedānta is also part of a traditional way of life in which self-realization is considered the goal of life, and individuals aspiring to this goal find guidance from competent teachers *(gurus)* in their own efforts *(sādhanā)* to reach this goal.

It is impossible to do justice to a theory so rich and complex as Advaita Vedanta in a few pages. Within the limited space available, only a rough sketch of its basic ideas can be presented. The selective summary attempted in the following pages is slanted toward the topic and purpose of this volume, namely, distinctive views of person, self, and identity as viewed in a cross-cultural comparative context.

THE BASIC TENETS OF THE ADVAITA (NONDUALIST) VEDANTA

Although Vedanta is generally counted as one of the six major systems of orthodox Indian thought, it contains within its fold several rival schools, such as those of Ramanuja Vallabha, Nimbaka, and Madhva. Regardless of the commonality in many of their aspects, they have fundamental, irreconcilable doctrinal

differences. Thus, while Śaṅkara's Advaita, or nondualistic, school is absolutistic, the rival schools of Ramanuja and Madhva are theistic and postulate, respectively, "qualified monist" and dualist ontologies. Since it is impossible to cover the many varieties of Vedanta, only the doctrines of Śaṅkara's nondualist (Advaita) school will be discussed here, not those of Vedānta in general.

The most fundamental doctrine of Śaṅkara philosophy is that there is one single principle that accounts for the ultimate reality. This principle, called "Brahman," is essentially indescribable. The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (2.3) declares that the "words and thoughts return from it and find it not." The Bṛthadāranyaka Upaniṣad (2.3.6) suggests that if you ask whether Brahman is like this, that, or the other, the answer must be "not so, not so." Nevertheless, for the sake of intelligibility, the indescribable Brahman is said to be approximately characterized by the following trilogy of terms: Being, Consciousness, and Bliss *(sat, cit, ānanda)*. The following adjectives are also occasionally used to help appreciate the nature of Brahman: eternal *(nitya),* pure *(śuddha),* sentient *(buddha),* ever released or emancipated (from the bondage of karma) *(mukta),* existent (satya), subtle (*sūksma*) all-pervasive or ubiquitous *(vibhu),* and "without a second" or nondual (advitīya).[11] Brahman is considered to be the immanent and transcendent principle of the universe; it permeates the entire world, and even extends beyond. An important thesis of the Advaita Vedanta is that the individual self (Atman) is ultimately the same as Brahman, although it appears to be different because of primeval misconstrual *(avidya,* roughly translated as "ignorance"). The world continues to appear in its ordinary, day-to-day form as long as one continues to cling to the misconstrued notions of the self and the world. But if one follows the Advaita Vedantic method (to be described below), one can realize the true nature of the self and of the ultimate reality as it *is.*

Here one may ask: If the Advaitists claim that Brahman is the single principle or reality "without a second," how do they account for the infinite variety of objects and the innumerable individual "selves" we see in the world? The Advaitists use various metaphors to account for the appearance of multiplicity in a nondual reality: The many changing objects are but temporary modifications of the same unchanging Brahman, like innumerable waves in a pool of water. The individual selves are but many reflections of the same Brahman; they appear to be different even as the same single sun appears to be many as it reflects in innumerable waves of water. Even as the space contained within a pot and in the house are but identical, so is the individual soul identical with the Supreme Soul *(paramātman).*

If this is correct, one might ask, how did the appearance of many originate from a single existent? In answer to this question, an elaborate theory of the origination of the five fundamental elements has been suggested since the time of the Upanisads.[12] A simpler, more interesting account of the genesis of the manifold world from the original One is found in a beautiful hymn of the *Ṛg Veda* (Book 10,

hymn 129),[13] called the *Nāsadīya Sūkta* It suggests that, at the beginning, there was only the One, without dualities of any kind: existence versus nonexistence, death versus immortality, light versus darkness, day versus night and so on. "I am One; let me be many," it said; and thus arose Desire, the primal seed of the world. "Would the gods know when this happened?" speculates the sage who authored the hymn. Then he answers the question himself, saying that the gods would not know it anyway, for even *they* must have arrived on the scene sometime later! In other words, there is no use speculating where and when it came from; we must assume that *māyā* the "grand illusion" of the manifold world that envelops the single reality, is without a beginning.

Individuality experienced by the selves is a consequence of this primeval illusion. It is a congenital error of human beings and persists in them as long as the "ordinary" states of consciousness last. However, it is dispelled with the dawn of an altered state of consciousness called the *turīyā* (literally, the "fourth") state of consciousness. (It may be recalled that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Upaniṣadic affirmation of the Self is based on the experience of this state.) In this state, the distinction between the subject and object, knower and known, which is characteristic of the ordinary states of consciousness, disappears. It is a transcognitive state, and as such cannot be adequately accounted for in terms of concepts and words. When such a state is attained, the practical reality of ordinary experience is said to be invalidated or falsified, just as what appears real in a dream is invalidated upon awakening. It is only from the vantage point of this higher level of consciousness that the phenomenal world is considered to be illusory. For all practical (*vyāvahārika*) purposes, however, it is taken to be true insofar as "it runs in an orderly manner uncontradicted by the accumulated experience of all human beings" (Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 446). Although there is but one reality, it may be recognized either as the transcendental reality *(parā sattā)* of the formless *(nirakara)* and qualityless *(nirguna)* Brahman as experienced in a transcognitive state of consciousness, or as the phenomenal world *(jagat)* that constitutes the practical reality *(vyāvahārika sattā)* comprehensible by means of the ordinary or sensory experience and reason.[14] The *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad (1.4) distinguishes between two types of knowledge: the higher form of knowledge *(parā vidyā)* concerning the ultimate reality and the lower form (*aparā vidyā*) pertaining to the phenomenal world. In the system of Advaita Vedanta this doctrine of "one reality known in different ways" combines a monistic metaphysics with a dualistic epistemology.

The Advaita Vedānta, like most other schools of Indian thought, devotes considerable attention to an analysis of the means to the attainment of knowledge and the criteria for its validation. At the practical level, the following six are accepted as means to knowledge *(pramāṇa):* direct perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, nonperception, and postulation. (We will have more on this in the next chapter when we discuss the self-as-knower.) As noted by Das-

gupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1), "right knowledge in Vedanta is the knowledge of an object which has not been found contradicted" (p. 471).[15] Abhyankar (192811968) explains that what we call "knowledge" *(prāmā)* is the cognition, or a mental state shaped in the image of an object, that has not (yet) been contradicted or falsified *(abādhita)* by any other means available.[16] That which is experienced in the fourth state of consciousness *(turīyā)* supplants the knowledge obtained through the six above-mentioned means in the ordinary wakeful state of consciousness, but is not contradicted by them. Transcognitive experience *(ānubhava),* which is attained when all cognitive processes come to a standstill, is considered to be the only dependable means to knowledge of the *ultimate* nature of the Self and reality.

Śaṅkara accepts the authority of the scriptures *(agama);* it is recognized under one of the six means to knowledge mentioned above, namely, verbal testimony. But he restricts the scope of the testimony of the scriptures to truths pertaining to the higher level of reality, which were revealed to the Vedic sages in their transcognitive experience. In regard to practical matters of the "lower" level of reality, he depends only on direct experience *(pratyakṣa)* and reason *(tarka).* Śaṅkara (1978,18.66) unequivocally states that one cannot be convinced that fire is lightless and cold, even if 100 scriptural proclamations asserted so.[17] This statement declares his total emancipation from the clutches of religious dogma. Sankara's resolute reliance on direct experience and rational principles (such as noncontradiction, or *abādha)* in regard to knowledge of all practical matters reflects the spirit of science manifest in his epistemology. Regardless of a scientific spirit manifest in this manner, however, Advaita Vedānta goes far beyond the scope of natural science, since, among other things, it deals with a transcendental reality, the nature of selfhood, attainment of higher levels of fulfillment in life, and other such concerns, which lie beyond the scope of science.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Upanisads (e.g., *Bṛhadaranyaka,* 4.3.33; *Taittiriya* 2.8) describe the blissfulness of Brahman as experienced in the fourth state of consciousness to be infinitely more joyous when compared with all the pleasures attainable through wealth and power. Since the true self is essentially the same as Brahman, bliss is at the very core of every human being. Most of us do not ordinarily experience the blissfulness of our real nature but experience suffering instead, since we tend to cling to erroneous notions of who we are. The practical aspect of the Advaita Vedanta involves a procedure for the removal of erroneous conceptions of the self, and thereby for its restoration to the original state of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. The aim of Vedanta is the attainment of liberation *(mokṣa)* by means of self-knowledge (Dharmarāja, 1972, p. 3), and the essence of liberation is characterized as "boundless joy and utter removal of pain."[18] In the balance of this chapter we shall first examine the Vedānta views of person, self, and identity, as well as its view of the nature and causes of suffering and ways for the restoration of the person to the original state of bliss.

THE CONCEPT OF *JĪVA* : THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC VIEW OF PERSONHOOD

The word *jīva* literally means a living being; all humans, animals, and even insects are *jīvas*. It is a common belief of the Indian culture that a jiva must go through the life cycles of millions of species *(yoni)* before being transformed into a human being. This view is vaguely suggestive of the origin of the human species in progressive evolution, although the ancients did not formulate a fully naturalistic, elaborate, and explicit theory of phylogenesis such as Darwin's. At any rate, in Vedānta, the term *jīva* is generally used to designate a human being rather than just any organism on the ladder of its ascent to the human form. From the early period of the Upanisads *(Taittirīya,* Chapter 2), the *jīva* has been conceptualized as a multilayered entity. There are five layers nested in one another, like the concentric sheaths of an onion (see Fig. 3.1). The outermost layer of the *jīva* is said to be "made of food" *(annamya kośa),* and designates the body. The second inner layer is called the "sheath of the vital breath" *(prāṇamaya kośa),* It involves breathing and other bodily processes that activate the organs and keep them functioning. The third inner layer, called the "mental sheath" (*manomaya kośa*), involves the sense organs. Since it is through the sensory functions like seeing and hearing that one seeks the objects of desire, this mental sheath is supposed to be the seat of egoistic striving and is said to manifest itself in the form of the involvement of the "me" in what is "mine" (Śaṅkara 1921, p. 168). The fourth inner layer, called the "cognitive sheath" *(vijnānamaya kośa),* refers to the intellect, involving perhaps the ideas, concepts, or constructs that one uses in getting to know the world. Finally, the fifth and innermost core of the *jīva* is called the "joyous sheath" *(ānandamaya kośa),* It is so called because it is said to reflect the bliss *(ānada pratibimba)* characteristic of the true self, and therefore is considered to be the seat of pleasure. The true self, the Ātman, which is manifest as the experiencing witness at the center of the *jīva's* awareness, is claimed to be identical with the ubiquitous

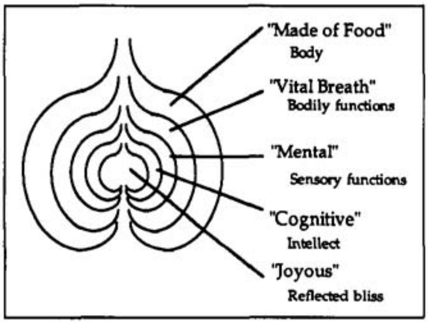

FIGURE 3.1. The Advaita Vedātic model of person: The five sheaths of jīva.

Brahman and is approximately characterized by the terms Being, Consciousness, and Bliss.

Here it is necessary to comment on the meaning and significance of the concept of *jīva* in the Advaita Vedānta theory of personhood. First, it obviously involves a structural metaphor-a device commonly used by contemporary theorists of personality- describing the person as a whole composed of "parts" (e.g., the Freudian id, ego, and superego). Second, it suggests a hierarchical arrangement of parts, implying the relatively greater importance of the parts at the "core" compared to the "peripheral" parts. Third, it may be noted that the various layers of the *jīva* resemble the different selves in William James's notion of the self (see Fig. 2.1 in the previous chapter). While James places the bodily self at the base of a vertical hierarchy of selves, the same is viewed as an outer sheath in the Vedantic view of the person. James's spiritual self vaguely reminds us of the cognitive sheath of the *jīva,* since both indicate conscious, nonmaterial, and relatively "central" or "higher" aspects of personality. Both James and Advaita Vedanta distinguish between the self-as-subject and the self-as-object; however, unlike James, Vedanta accepts only the former to be the true self, dismissing the identification of the self with any object as ultimately deceptive. This is an important point of difference between them, and we shall examine it in some detail later on in this chapter.

The Upanisads often used the term *puruṣa* to designate an individual, and the terms *puruṣa, ātman,* and *jīvātman* were often used as synonyms. Although the word *puruṣa* as used in contemporary Indian languages connotes man rather than woman, the ancient Sanskrit usage implied no such gender preference.[19] As noted in Chapter 2, it was common in the Upanisads to characterize the individual as a knower, enjoyer/sufferer, and an agent.[20] This characterization of the *jīva* is central to the Advaita Vedanta view of personhood. It is impossible to know, do, or enjoy anything without proper equipment such as normal sensory and motor organs and cognitive capacities. Thus, the *Kaṭha* (3.4) Upaniṣad says that it is only a self equipped with senses and mind that can be an enjoyer.[21] It is the delusional association of the Atman-Brahman with "adjuncts" *(upādhi)* like the mind and senses that produces the individuality and "enjoyership" *(bhoktṛtvam)* of the individual *jīva.* Śaṅkara (1978, 13.20)[22] notes that it is only the individualized *jīva* (rather than the infinite Atman-Brahman) that can be an enjoyer, and outlines (in 1980, 2.3.32) the nature of the "inner instrument" needed for its activities and enjoyment in the world. The inner instrument (*antaḥkarana*) includes (1) the *mind* (manas) manifesting attentivity or "minding" as we might call it, (2) the *intellect (buddhi),* which implies the capacity for determination or ascertainment *(niścayatmaka)* and (3) the citta, which implies (as articulated in Patanjali's Yoga) the storehouse of memories and other traces of past experience that prompt actions under appropriate conditions. The inner instrument is believed to continually undergo various modifications that manifest in the form of desire, construal, doubt,

faith or belief and disbelief, perseverance or fickleness, shame, intellection, fear, and so on *(Bṛhudaranyaka* Upanisad, 1.5.3). Such feelings and thoughts are only the modifications of the inner instrument and not of the eternally blissful Self *(Ātman,* but one continues to experience them as one's own as long as the self remains erroneously identified with its adjunct, the inner instrument.

The Concept of Jīva in Context: Some Aspects of the Indian Worldview

Every theory of personhood is a part of a larger worldview that the theorist shares with his or her community. To understand and appreciate the concept of *jiva,* it is necessary to have some idea of the worldview in which it developed. To help identify the crucial aspects of the traditional Indian worldview that are relevant in this regard, we may turn to the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* which is one of the most popular and influential texts of the Indian tradition. It represents the quintessence of the Upaniṣadic thought and reflects some of the most dominant aspects of the Indian worldview. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* Śaṅkara refers to many concepts that have been dominant in the Indian worldview, but are neither central to nor a specialty of the Advaita Vedānta For instance, he comments on the concept of Prakṛti, which is postulated by the dualistic Sāṅkhya system of philosophy to designate the material as opposed to the spiritual domain of reality. As a strict monist, Sankara cannot accept the concept of Prakrti as a separate and independent ontological category, as the dualistic Sāṅkhyas do. He therefore adapts it to the Advaita Vedanta by equating Prakrti with *māyā,* i.e., primeval "illusion" or misconstrual that manifests in the form of the phenomenal world. Śaṅkara (1978,13.29) cites the authority of the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (4.10)23 for doing so. We shall leave the issue of the justifiability of adapting a basically dualistic concept within a monist framework to the apologists of the Advaita Vedānta and turn to a brief account of the concept of Praktri. For, it is the "material world" of Prakṛti-or practical reality *(vyavaharika satta)* of *maya*-in which all organisms (or *jīvas)* must function.

Prakṛti designates the entire material world. It is believed to be in a constant state of flux. The incessant changes in it are believed to be the result of continual interaction among three components, qualities *(guṇas),* or strands from which the cloth of the material world is woven, so to speak. The three strands of Prakṛti are: inertia or mass *(tamas),* movement or energy *(rajas),* and sattva a concept that is difficult to translate into an English equivalent. *Sattva* is variously translated as lightness, illumination, or "intelligence-stuff" (Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, pp. 241-244), and is considered to be "potential consciousness" and is associated with pleasure, goodness, and happiness in a person's experience and behavior (Radhakrishnan 1927/1931, Vol. 2, p. 262). All these strands or qualities *(guṇa)* are present in anything at anytime, but one of them may dominate at a given time while

others recede; things keep changing as the balance among the three qualities is disturbed every now and then. The changes brought about by the interaction of qualities of Prakṛti are assumed to be lawfully governed. This axiomatic assumption is generally designated by the Law of Karma (O'Flaherty, 1980). As noted in Chapter 1, this law states that every action (which is the literal meaning of the word *karma)* has its necessary antecedents and inevitable consequences. It implies a complex variety of determinism that applies equally to physical as well as mental phenomena, and functions equally in natural as well as moral domains. Its acceptance ensures that the world is a cosmos and not a chaos; events are lawfully governed and not left to happenstance. I shall postpone the discussion of the causal and moral implications of the Law of Karma to Chapter 6. In the following section of this chapter, I shall focus on the tripartite view of the material world of Prakrti (or *māyā,* as the Advaitists call it) in regard to its implications for (1) the regularities in the phenomenal world, (2) the nature of the individual differences, and (3) the determinants of human behavior.

Regularities in the Phenomenal World

The idea that all changes in the world are caused by a lawful interaction of the components of which things are made suggests that all events in the world are natural occurrences, not the results of mysterious intervention's by wanton spirits or deities. The Sāṅkara system, which has specially developed this concept, is atheistic; it is assumed that there is no higher power to interfere with the lawful governance of the world. According to the theistic formulations of Vedānta, like those of Rāmānuja and Madhva, the future of a person is believed to depend on the grace or intervention of God *(īśvara),* which implies that God has power to interfere with the Law of Karma. The Advaita Vedanta admits no such divine power. Sankara (1978, 9.10) cites the authority of the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (6.11), which describes God as an "over seer of deeds" *(karmādhyakṣa),* residing in all living beings as a mere witness.[24] He is like Newton's God who gave Nature the laws of motion and then left Nature alone to govern herself according to them. Unlike Newton's laws, however, the Law of Karma is supposed to apply to the moral as well as natural sphere; as you sow, so you reap. This law applies strictly to the moral order; even God could not give anyone unmerited rewards. In his commentary on the Vedanta aphorisms, Śaṅkara (1980, 2.1.34-35) suggests that if we were to think of God as having the capacity to interfere with the working of the Law of Karma, we would have to accept the charges of favoritism *(vaiṣamya)* and cruelty *(nairghṛṇya)* against God. Śaṅkara would of course have the God of his conception untouched by such charges. Like St. Augustine, he assigns the blame of the differing fates of individuals to doings of their own will and exempts God from blemish. We will have another look at this issue in Chapter 6.

The foregoing account of the strictly law-governed nature of the events within

the domain of the Prakrti should make it clear that it conveys a *naturalistic* worldview, not a supernaturalistic one. Like the worldview of science, it assumes that there is orderliness of events in the world and attempts to explain them in terms of a lawful interaction of mass and energy. The concepts of *tamas* and *rajas* can be said to be roughly comparable to the modem concepts of mass and energy, although they are much less precisely formulated than their contemporary counterparts. The third component of Prakṛti namely *sattva,* is somewhat similar to "information," provided that the latter is accorded an ontic status and causal potency as suggested by Bakan (1974). Taken in this sense, the tripartite model of Prakṛti tries to account for all events in the world in terms of the interaction of mass, energy, and information, so to speak. This is like Popper's model, which construes three interacting "worlds," or components of the cosmic order, to help explain the nature of physical, biological, and psychological events (Popper & Eccles, 1977). (For a comparison of Popper's view of the three "worlds" with the three strands of Prakṛti see Paranjpe, 1983.)

One implication of the idea of the Law of Karma in theories of personhood is that persons are seen as simultaneously belonging to a natural and a moral order. These ideas can be seen as parallels to Erikson's concepts of the person as belonging simultaneously to the interpenetrating spheres of the "soma" suggestive of the natural order and to the "ethos" or a moral order. An implication of the tripartite division of the natural order of Prakṛti or phenomenal world for conceptions of personality may be pointed out here. The tripartite division of Prakṛti is used in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to help account for individual differences. I have explained the typology of persons in terms of the *sāttvika, rājasa,* and *tāmasika* types in an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1988, pp. 193–194). Since it is not crucial for the present purpose, it is not reproduced here.

The Nature and Determinants of Human Behavior

In the Advaita Vedānta, as in many other schools of Indian thought, human behavior or action is designated by a generic concept called *karma,* which includes physical, verbal, as well as mental activity. All experiences and behaviors of organisms are believed to leave behind their traces *(Saṁskara),* which bear fruit (phala) under appropriate conditions, leading to their inevitable consequences on later experiences and behaviors. If the original experience is positive, its traces will prompt the organism to seek the objects associated with the original experience and vice versa. The tendencies to seek or avoid objects are thus traced to the history of the organism. Some of these tendencies result from traces left behind by experiences and behaviors of the organism in the present life cycle in the form of memories *(smṛti).* Others may be the results of traces left behind by events prior to birth, which manifest in the form of drives *(vāsanā)* (see Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 263). This view resonates with the contemporary notion that an organ-

ism's present action tendencies are a result of its developmental and phylogenetic history.

According to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system, which has elaborately developed a theory of *karma,* the totality of potencies for action that are cumulated in an organism as a result of the past are designated as *karmāśaya.* Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (see Patañjali's 1978, 2.13)[25] suggest that the nature of traces accumulated over the previous life cycles that may not have been expended or played out as yet determine the type of species in which an individual would be born, the nature of the life cycle it would experience, and the kinds of pleasure and pain it will experience in the subsequent life cycle. This suggests that human beings, as members of a species, would experience their passage through their life cycle in a pattern common to the species. If this interpretation is correct, then a modem conception of ontogeny, such as the Eriksonian view of epigenesis, may be viewed as reasonably compatible with the Yogic and Vedāntic conception of *vāsanā,* roughly meaning drive. This view amounts to an explanation of individual behavior in terms of what we call *heredity,* except that this ancient view of the heritability of character is based on the notion of reincarnation of the soul rather than an understanding of genetics.

We shall leave aside the controversial notion of reincarnation, since it cannot be adequately discussed within the scope of this volume. We may simply note, however, that the idea of reincarnation is a corollary of the more basic notion that present behaviors are a consequence of a chain of events in the past, and that present actions will in turn lead to their inevitable consequences in the future. Everyone is thus caught in an endless cycle of events and their consequences; the burden of the past chains us to the world. This notion suggests a deterministic account of human behavior and is adopted by almost the entire spectrum of otherwise diverse schools of Indian thought. It raises the question of freedom versus determinism in a manner parallel to the counterpart of this issue in Western philosophy and psychology. We shall return to this issue in Chapter 6.

Self and Identity According to the Advaita Vedānta

Self is clearly the most central issue in the Upanisads and the Vedanta Some of the prominent features of the Advaita Vedānta view could be concisely presented with the help of a free paraphrase of selected verses from Śaṅkara's popular work, the *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination* (Vivekacūḍāmani) (Sankara, 1921):

> Inhalation, exhalation, yawning, hunger, movement and the like are the functions of the vital breath [not of the Atman, the true Self]. The ego, reflecting the consciousness of the Ātman, glows through the activities of eyes and so on, manifesting itself through egoism and pride of the "me" and "mine." It is the ego, not the eternally blissful Ātman, that takes pride in being an agent and enjoys or suffers with gains and losses. (verses 102–105)

> There is something within us which is always the substrate of the conscious feeling of the "I." That something is a witness of the three states of consciousness [wakeful, dream, and deep sleep], and is different from the five sheaths of the *jīva* This something sees everything, but is not seen in turn; it enlivens the intellect, but is not affected by the intellect in turn. (verses 125–127)
>
> This Inner Self *(antarātman)* is the Eternal Self *(puruṣaḥpurāṇo),* and involves an integral experience of bliss *(akhaṇḍasukhānubhūti).* (verse 131) This is the witness of the mind and its modifications, and of the activities of the body and the sense organs. He accompanies all changes and activities like heat in an iron ball, but neither acts nor is subject to modifications. (verse 133)
>
> The misconstrual of the non-self as self ties a man to egoism, and it is this tie *(bandha)* which leads to the suffering of the cycle of birth and death. Having considered the body to be real and construing it to be the "me," the jīva nurtures it and protects it by following its desires. The ego thus becomes trapped in a reality of its own (mis)construal-like a moth in its cocoon. (verse 137)
>
> To emancipate himself from bondage a wise man should discriminate between the Self and the non-Self. Thereby alone can he recognize himself as Being–Consciousness–Bliss, and attain happiness. (Verse 152) (paraphrased by A. C. Paranjpe; see Paranjpe, 1988, p. 196)

It should be clear from the above paraphrase of Śaṅkara's views that in the Advaita Vedānta the Self is *not* equated with the body and its activities, sensory or cognitive functions, the ego, egoism, or agency. While the Advaita Vedantists unambiguously characterize the person as one who knows, feels, and acts, they often characterize the Self as a witness *(sākṣin)* that "stays over the peak" *(kūṭastha)* to sharply separate it from the cognitive, affective, and active features of personhood and to emphasize its immovable or unchanging nature.[26] The Advaitic view of the Self is thus clearly transpersonal and transcendental. In Advaita Vedanta a sharp distinction is made between the true self (or Self) and the ego *(ahaṁkāra),* and the ego is seen as a product of misconstrual. The metaphor of the moth trapped in a cocoon of its own creation vividly portrays the image of an ego wrapped up in a cognitively constructed reality of its own making. It is common in the Advaita Vedānta to view the Ātman as self-luminous; it provides the "light" that makes the understanding possible, and needs no outside source of illumination for it to be seen.[27] In contrast, the mind is believed to be "material" *(jaḍa),* and not self-luminous. The mind, as well as thoughts that emerge in it, are said to derive their luminous or "glowing" quality from the Atman, just as a colorless crystal *(sphaṭika)* reflects the bright color of the hibiscus flower when placed next to it. Ātman is the "seer" *(dṛk)* and all the rest is "seen" *(dṛśya).* The distinction between the seer/seen or subject/object *(viṣayin/viṣaya)* is central to the Vedantic view of the self. *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka,* a popular Advaita Vedantic text of uncertain authorship explains this distinction as follows:

> Form is perceived by the eye which is its perceiver; the eye is perceived by the mind which is its perceiver; the modifications of the mind are known by the Witness who knows them all but is not known in turn. (1)

> The eye is able to distinguish between the blue and the yellow, and is also able to perceive as unity [i.e., as single *(ekadhā)* category, "form"], as well as the multiplicity of forms such as big and small, long and short. (2)
>
> The mind is able to cognize the dullness and sharpness of sight and also of the presence and absence of sight because of its ability to put them into a single category. The same applies to the sensation of sound and touch [implying that the unity of the mind is to be similarly inferred]. (3)
>
> It is possible for us to distinguish between doubt and decision, between the state of belief versus disbelief, and between feelings of modesty, fear, and others because consciousness (citi) can bring them into a single category. (4) *(Drg-drśya viveka,* 1-4; paraphrased by A. C. Paranjpe; see Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 266–267)

Quite clearly, the "seer" of the Advaita Vedānta is the subject connected with a myriad of objects of consciousness. There are some clear Western parallels that may be noted here. First, the unity of the perceiver is conceptualized mostly like Kant's (1781/1966) "synthetical unity of apperception" (p. 77). Second, the connection between the subject and object may be understood in terms of what Brentano (1874/1974) called intentionality, or the directedness of consciousness to its objects. Third, the concept of *dṛk,* described above, is comparable to Husserl's (1933/1977, p. 66) notion of the self-identical subject-pole that retains its sameness in relation to the ever-changing objects at the object-pole of the intentional states of consciousness. Fourth, the Advaita Vedāntic "seer" is a transcendental entity similar to the Kantian transcendental ego, except that, unlike the latter, it is not a center of volition as well. This is an important difference that will be discussed later in this chapter. Before we discuss that point, it is necessary to see how Sankara accounts for the unity and sameness of the Self.

Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) beings his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtra* by saying that although subject and object *(viṣayin-viṣaya)* are as contradictory as light and darkness, they appear fused because of an illusory superimposition *(adhyāsa)* of the properties of one on the other.[28] The standard Advaitic examples of illusion are mistaking a rope for a snake, where the dangerousness of the snake is mistakenly attributed to a harmless rope, or mistaking a pillar for a man, where the human properties of life and motion are superimposed on an inanimate pillar. Similarly, the Atman, which is unchanging and always blissful, appears to be continually changing, now happy then sad, clear or confused and so on, due to the superimposition of the attributes of ego onto it. Reciprocally, the ever-changing ego derives its sense of selfsameness by misattributing the Ātman's permanence onto itself. Knowing, acting, and suffering are the properties of the ego, born of the mind or "inner instrument" *(antaḥkaraṇa);* it is the ego that doubts and determines, feels clear or confused, agitated or arrested, exhilarated or morose. Yet, such states are attributed to the Ātman, which transcends all such mutations. On the other hand, the fickle ego derives a sense of permanence and the inert body gains consciousness from the unchanging and conscious Ātman. Seen from the Advaita Vedantic point of view, this is the most fundamental attributional error, whereby

the true self is identified with the nonself and vice versa. Due to this error, the "I," an unchanging self-as-subject, identifies itself with the ego and falsely sees itself as continually changing: now sad, then happy, sometimes confused, other times clear, and so on. The continually changing ego, on the other hand, perceives itself as having remained the same, falsely deriving its sense of selfsameness from the qualityless *(nirguṇa)* and unchanging Self. According to the Advaita Vedānta, such misconstrual constitutes the primeval illusion *(ādi māyā)* and is the prime cause of human suffering.

Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) suggests that the dual attributional errors mistaking the Self for the ego and vice versa occur because of memory.[29] Past memories of dangerous encounters with snakes, for instance, often prompt a fearful misperception of a rope as a serpent. Why do so many people suffer from the same error mistaking their true Self for the body, mind, or ego? The answer is that the effects of past experience keep on prompting us to think, feel, and act in particular ways. Effects of the past include the memories of experiences from birth onward and the cumulative traces or the beginningless past prior to birth that are passed on to us in the form of drives *(vāsanā)*. The history of countless beings *(jīvas)* is traced back to the primeval illusion *(māyā)* that has always masked the single reality; every being has been trapped throughout the past in the perpetual cycle of actions and their consequences. As soon as one discards the erroneous identification with the ever-changing states of the ego, the true nature of the Self as Being, Consciousness, and Bliss shines forth, and one sidesteps and thereby "escapes" the miserable chain of action and its consequences.

THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC VIEW OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

In the Indian culture, by and large, life has been commonly viewed as part of a chain of action and its consequences that one must try to end, not perpetuate. A common assumption is that the balance sheet of worldly (as well as other worldly) life is marked with red ink; on the whole, the amount of suffering exceeds that of pleasures.[30] This view is reflected in several schools of Indian thought and underlies the notion that seeking release *(mokṣa)* from the chain of actions and its consequences *(saṁsāra)* is one of the central goals of life.[31] We shall examine this persistent theme of Indian culture in some detail in Chapter 5. Here, it is enough to note that the Advaita Vedanta follows the Upanisads in assuming that true happiness can be attained not by pursuing the pleasures that money and power can buy but through the discovery of an inexhaustible source of inner bliss. This view stands in contrast to the views of the human condition with an emphasis on suffering from sin, anxiety, alienation, or maladaptation, which are popular in the West, that have shaped, respectively, Christian, Freudian, existentialist, and behavioral psychologies. (For a more detailed discussion of views of the human condition and their implications for psychology, see Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 85–113.)

The Advaita Vedāntic Method for Self-realization

Before undertaking a specific set of practices prescribed by the Advaita Vedantic method for self-realization, a person is expected to have some background preparation. According to Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (versus 18–28), this preparation involves acquiring the following four aids or means *(sādhana-catuṣṭaya)* to self-realization:

1. Make a wise discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent *(nitya-anitya-viveka)* with regard to the self. The basic idea here is that one should critically examine *what* remains unchanged within us throughout life and thereby provides a firm basis for our personal identity. in other words, one should try to find out what it is that allows the ever-changing "me"s to be reincarnations of one and the same "I." The Advaita Vedānta provides a simple guideline for the quest for identity: the true Self is that which always remains the same; the continually changing self-definitions are manifestations of the ego, which is not the true Self. As pointed out in *Dṛg-dṛśya viveka* (quoted above), what remains unchanged in an individual is only the self-as-subject *(dṛk);* every single aspect of the self-as-object *(drsya)* changes now or later in life. To put it in the language of William James, a firm basis for one's personal identity cannot be found in one's "empirical selves" such as the body, material possessions, social roles, or the attitudes and images about oneself. To put it in Erik Erikson's terminology, the only thing that remains unchanged in a person throughout the life cycle is the "center of awareness," not one's ego identity. The first means to self-realization according to the Advaita Vedānta, then, is to launch a serious inquiry into the nature of the self, taking permanence as the hallmark of the true self.

It must be noted here that a mere cognitive awareness of what remains the same in a person or even a scholarly understanding of the issue of sameness versus change in personality is not considered adequate. If one has recognized that material possessions and social selves are impermanent, and is yet strongly emotionally attached to them, one is not truly self-realized. Genuine self-realization requires much more than an intellectual exercise, as the remainder of the list of aids suggests.

2. Detachment with regard to gains in this or the otherworldly life *(ihāmutra-phala-virāga).* As long as one is convinced that wealth, power, a place in the heaven, or other such worldly or otherworldly gains are truly worth attaining, one is wedded to a pursuit of "external" goals. Success in attaining them depends only partly on what is within one's control, and when attained they do not guarantee complete and permanent satisfaction. According to the Advaita Vedānta, lasting peace or tranquility does not depend on any external objects; it lies in the deepest regions of inner subjectivity. The Advaita Vedānta is prescribed for those who have recognized the transience of object-dependent gains or pleasures, have set out in search of a lasting peace of mind, and are prepared to cultivate a dispassionate outlook toward worldly gains such as power or wealth.

3. The acquisition of the following six virtues:
   a. Controlling the mind so as to rest it firmly on a single objective *(śama)*
   b. Withdrawing senses from the objects of pleasure *(duma)*
   c. Preventing the mind from being controlled by external objects *(uparati)*
   d. Forbearance, or enduring hardships without lamenting or becoming anxious *(titiksā)*
   e. Faith *(śraddhā)* in the validity of the teaching of the scriptures and the advice of a capable teacher *(guru)*. (Against the backdrop of Sankara's epistemology discussed earlier, it should be clear that faith here does not mean an antirational attitude or a "blind" faith.)
   f. Firm resting of the mind on the formless Brahman without being enticed by desires for indulgence *(samādhāna)*

4. Intense desire for liberating oneself from egoism and the perpetual chain of action and its consequences *(mumukṣutvam)*.

Three Steps to Self-realization According to the Advaita Vedānta

The Advaita Vedanta prescribes a relentless critical inquiry into the true nature of the self *(ātmavicāra)* as a method for attaining self-realization. Ever since the early period of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (2.4.5; 4.5.6), numerous Advaita Vedantic texts have suggested the following three steps in this process of inquiry:

1. Carefully "listening" to the nondualist teaching of Vedanta *(śravaṇa)*
2. Repeatedly and deeply reflecting upon or contemplating what is learned from those teachings *(manana)*
3. Becoming so completely absorbed in contemplation *(nididhyāsana)* of Brahman that no other thought enters the mind

The first step just mentioned is no different from the usual form of studying such as listening to lectures or reading books. In the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā,* Dharmarāja (1972, p. 212) describes the second step, namely reflection, as a mental activity involving an attempt to clear all doubts and refute all possible objections against the Advaita Vedāntic doctrine of the nondual Brahman. The doubts and objections may be based on any and all sources of knowledge: observation, inference, argument, scriptural statements, and so on. One is expected to try to carefully examine and refute them all in a rational manner. In his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (2.4.5), Śaṅkara stresses that this activity involves the use of reason *(tarka)*. A careful rational assessment of all conceivable alternative viewpoints is expected to lead to a courage of conviction and single-minded devotion to one's chosen path. Not a single doubt or objection should remain unexamined. Every doubt and objection should be satisfactorily resolved, so that one is able to concentrate the mind fully and without distraction. Following this comes the third and final step in which one mediates with full concentration on the Ātman–

Brahman. Attention is withdrawn from all objects of thought, so that nothing excepting the center of awareness is left in the field of experience, thus revealing the Ātman, or the self-as-witness in its nascent form. We shall return to more detailed discussion of these three steps to self-realization in the next chapter.

The Advaita Vedāntic Method Interpreted in Contemporary Idiom

The Advaita Vedantic method involves an ambitious and highly demanding program aimed at a complete transformation of one's life. It is not a program of therapy to be administered by a therapist to psychotic or neurotic patients, but a self-help program for those who aspire to higher levels of fulfillment. The Advaita Vedāntic prescription for the cultivation of virtues such as dispassionateness and forbearance may appear to some as a moralism, but it is interesting to note that these virtues are recommended as "aids" to self-realization rather than ends in themselves. The process of self-development described in the Advaita Vedānta begins with the recognition of one's imperfections, moves through the process of the cultivation of dispassionateness and through the "steps" such as study and reflection, and ends in self-realization.[32] It is this movement from ignorance to enlightenment that is interpretable in cognitive psychological terms. Such an interpretation would be admittedly partial, because the practice of the Advaita Vedantic methods is far more complex than the cognitive aspects that I wish to focus on in the discussion to follow.

The first step of the Advaita Vedantic method *(śravaṇa)* involves acquiring and reorganizing information as required in any program of study. In cognitive psychological terms, it involves assimilation and accommodation in a Piagetian sense, i.e., "taking in" new information in the hitherto established ways of understanding and changing established ways of understanding in light of the new information. The second, reflective stage *(manana)* requires a critical study of "scriptural" texts, and as such it is comparable to "exegesis" in the Biblical tradition. As an attempt to grasp the correct meaning conveyed by textual materials, it involves hermeneutic criticism as discussed in the current trend in the literature inspired by Heidegger and Gadamer (Palmer, 1969). The Advaita Vedanta, like many other schools of Indian thought, is dialectical in spirit, i.e., deeply involved in the justification and refutation *(maṇḍana-khaṇḍana)* of theses and antitheses *(pūrva pakṣa-uttara pakṣa)*. This spirit is clearly reflected in the scholarly texts of Vedanta that examine in great detail one proposition after another in relation to alternative viewpoints of every serious school of thought known to the author. But the dialectics and hermeneutics in the Advaita Vedānta are not restricted to an impersonal analysis of embodied texts; they include a deeply personal scrutiny of the story of one's own life, so to speak. The Advaita Vedāntic approach is not merely analytical but also existential, and its existential emphasis is more directly and deeply personal than that of Heidegger and Sartre. The

personal transformation expected from the self-directed hermeneutics of the Advaita Vedāntic method lends itself to a cognitive psychological interpretation.

If a person was expected to engage in self-criticism and no guideline was provided, the exercise would turn out to be confusing and futile, or even disastrous. As noted, the Advaita Vedānta provides a simple rule of the thumb to guide critical self-examination: the true Self is that which remains unchanged; anything subject to change is the nonself. This means that one must keep convincing oneself that, in the ultimate analysis, one's own body, material possessions, social roles, friendships and other personal relationships, beliefs and attitudes, one's own name and nationality, almost everything with which one is normally identified is *not* the true Self. The reactions to such a demand are predictable. What the Advaita Vedānta is asking us to do is certainly difficult, but does it at least make any sense? How could one reject everything about the self that one "knows" oneself to be? How could one unlearn what one has learned to be true and reliable and disown what one has learned to love and to cherish, just because a quaint doctrine claims that it is good to do so? Regardless of what good will come out of it, it is not easy to disidentify with everything that one has learned to identify with; one's psychosocial identity is too deeply entrenched to be eradicated even with methods as drastic as "brainwashing" used by the Chinese in the forced ideological conversion of the American prisoners in the Korean war (Lifton, 1961). Assuming for a moment that a person realizes that he is not "truly" the son, the father, the friend, and other social selves that he is supposed to have been, does it mean that he must renounce the world and become a hermit?

Renunciation of social obligations *(saṁnyāsa)* and taking to a hermitage is indeed one of the ways suggested in the Advaita Vedantic tradition, but not the only one. The other suggested way permits the aspirant to remain involved with a normal social life, but recommends nonattached action. (We will discuss the strategy of this approach in Chapter 6.) In either case, one aims at ultimately destroying, or at least making powerless, one's ego. This aim is attained, I think, through a systematic and thorough "cognitive deconstruction" of the ego. This is a complex issue that requires a detailed examination of the Advaita Vedāntic accounts of "meditation," or critical self-examination, in light of cognitive psychological concepts. We shall return to this topic in the next chapter.

The Advaita Vedāntic Approach Seen From a Western Viewpoint

There are obvious limitations to an interpretation in Western psychological terms of an ancient Eastern system of thought such as the Advaita Vedānta. It is impossible to capture its rigor and richness while viewing it within the relatively narrow confines of what is called a "theory of personality" in modem psychology. Nevertheless, I hope to have shown that the Advaita Vedānta presents, among other things, a conceptual model of a human being no less comprehensive and rigorous

than any of the contemporary theories of personality. Its central propositions are experientially verifiable; its views on individual differences and other matters are open to empirical investigation; and most of all, it provides a method of "applied psychology" aimed at the improvement of the human condition. Although their roots are ancient, the principles of a psychology according to the Advaita Vedanta need not be relegated to history, because their concerns - such as the search for an inner peace and the need to overcome egoism - are no less relevant today than in any other period of history.

The Advaita Vedānta developed as a way of life in a long and unbroken cultural tradition, and its view of the human beings, as well as its specific concepts, have been shaped by the history of its cultural context. When seen from the vantage point of contemporary personality theories, many of its features stand in sharp contrast: its extremely idealistic approach and its neglect of the various forms of psychopathology and of the other frailties of human character. The Advaita Vedānta is idealistic, both in the sense of an emphasis on ideas as opposed to "real," Le., tangible objects, and also in the sense of cherishing high ideals to the relative neglect of the pressing problems of practical life. The ideal pursued by the Advaita Vedanta is the ultimate release *(moṣka)* from the suffering and the attainment of bliss through self-realization. This ideal constitutes one of the four goals prescribed for men *(puruṣārtha)* in the Indian tradition. Trying to attain this goal is intrinsically an individual, rather than social, enterprise, and this is the province of Advaita Vedanta As such, the Advaita Vedantic view of personhood emphasizes individual as opposed to social aspects of persons, the latter being assigned to social disciplines dealing with ethics *(dharma śāstra),* economics and politics *(artha śāstra),* and the art and science of love *(kāma sāstra).* Small wonder, then, that when compared with many contemporary Western views of man Erikson's or Skinner's, for instance- the Advaita Vedanta would seem to de - emphasize the social aspects of personality.

The Advaita Vedāntic approach often invites the charge of being individualis - tic, much to the chagrin of its protagonists. The critics charge that it neglects the interpersonal and group influences on human beings, and it seems to consider a person's station in society as determined by deeds in past life rather than shaped by individual and collective action in this life. As well, it seems to be unconcerned with disease, retardation, poverty, exploitation, and other such practical and social problems. It is concerned more with the attainment of individual salvation than with the creation of a utopian world. Many followers of the Advaita Vedanta are often unprepared to recognize this and tend to think it is a complete, or even a perfect, system. Some of its critics, on the other hand, fault it for neglecting the "common man" or the practical problems of the world, and expect the Advaita Vedānta to deliver what it did not promise or was not designed to accomplish. Most theories of personality present but partial accounts; only when taken together can they present a more comprehensive perspective. The Advaita Vedānta can be

expected to fit the spectrum of available theories, complementing where many others are weak-in providing a method for attaining highest levels of fulfillment, for instance.

A Cross-Cultural Overview of Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic Views

Regardless of the many obvious differences in the historical and socio-cultural contexts in which the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedantic views originated, there are some remarkable commonalities. Both offer detailed, complex, and rich conceptual models of personhood. Both consider persons as individual beings who can think, feel, and act within natural and moral orders, although their conceptions of natural and moral orders are considerably different. For Erikson's model the central theme is the development and maintenance of a sense of unity in diversity of selves and of selfsameness in the face of changes across the life cycle. The central concern for both models is the principle of selfsameness in persons, although they speak of it in different terms. Both Erikson and Advaita Vedanta conceive of an agentic ego in some form or other and distinguish it from a center of awareness that lies beyond the changing thoughts about oneself and the world. In general, both aim at transforming the narrowly egotistic concerns of persons and inculcating wider humanistic concerns in their lives. There is thus a core set of closely compatible ideas and concerns that warrant a meaningful comparison between their views despite differences of various sorts that clearly distinguish the two approaches from each other.

Systematic comparison of theories of personality is not a new enterprise; at least for the Western theories of personality, Rychlak (1968, 1981) has proposed a metatheoretical framework that places personality theories on a continuum between the Lockean model of theory building at one pole and the Kantian at the other. To put it simply, according to Rychlak, the Lockean model involves a bottom-up approach that begins with empirically observable molecular units, such as stimulus–response as in behaviorism, and works gradually from concrete to abstract entities and simple to complex concepts. By contrast, the Kantian model involves a top-down approach that begins with a set of abstract constructs and expects to proceed both from abstract and complex to concrete and simple, as well as vice versa. Leaving aside for a moment the problems in extending such a model across cultures, it may be said that both Eriksonian and Advaita Vedanta models start with several highly complex and fairly abstract concepts and deal with individual person's concerns within their respective frameworks. This common feature of their theoretical frameworks makes the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedantic views more meaningfully comparable to the existential and subjectivistic approaches in contemporary personality theory (e.g., Binswanger, 1958; Boss, 1963)

than empiricist, objectivist, and quantitatively oriented theories (e.g., Cattell, 1959; Eysenck, 1970; Skinner, 1974). There is no ready-made metatheoretical framework for comparing or integrating theories across cultures, although there is some discussion in the literature of problems in comparative philosophy (Devaraja, 1967) and cross-cultural psychology (Ho, 1992). For want of such a framework, I shall use the rough guideline of focusing on the three types of issues that are often discussed in Western philosophy, namely, views of what there is (ontology), how it can be *known* (epistemology), and what it is all *for* (ethics/axiology). (It may be recalled that a similar framework was used in Chapter 2 in comparing Indian and Western perspectives on the affirmation and denial of the self.)

There are obvious differences in the ontological underpinnings of the Vedāntic viewpoint when compared with those of Erikson. While as a system of philosophy Vedānta has a clearly defined strongly monistic principle of Ātman–Brahman, Erikson's theory is based on a vaguely dualistic conception of reality derived from its Freudian background and Cartesian legacy. Anyone acquainted with the intellectual history of contemporary psychology would wonder how events in the Eriksonian "orders" of the psyche and soma would ever connect with each other, given that mind and matter have been conceived in strictly opposite terms and as totally exclusive domains. If a critic were to press for an answer, Erikson probably would have been as vague about the mind–body interaction as Freud (1940/1964), who once said that although he was sure about the brain and the acts of consciousness, "[e]verything that lies between these terminal points is unknown to us" (p. 144). The Advaita Vedanta avoids problems of interactionist dualism by being committed to a strictly monistic conception of reality. The Eriksonian domains of psyche and soma are somewhat parallel to the notions of *sattva* and *tamas,* the conceptions of "illumination" and "inertia" as strands of Prakṛti, which Vedantists share with the Sāṅkhya system. Yet, the nature of interaction among the three strands of Prakṛti is as vague as that of the relations among the three Eriksonian "orders." Regardless of such problems of vagueness in the worldviews of Erikson and Advaita Vedānta, both viewpoints assume that humans are part of some kind of moral order, even as physicists must assume that there is an order in the cosmos, although the connection between the subatomic and intergalactic forces is yet unknown. If we assume that persons are creatures held responsible for the consequences of their actions and are also to be the subject matter of a systematic worldview, then it seems that the working assumption of some order in the moral domain is as imperative as is the assumption of orderliness in nature in the natural sciences. The Vedantic notion of moral order defined in terms of the Law of Karma needs closer examination, and we shall return to a discussion of this issue in Chapter 6.

A radical difference exists in the epistemic underpinnings of the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic theories. The difference between them does not lie in adopting contrasting epistemologies, such as rationalism versus empiricism, as it does in

the case of the Piagetian and Skinnerian approaches. Indeed, while Advaita strongly and explicitly supports observation and argument as criteria of truth in appropriate domains of inquiry, Erikson seems to give them a silent consent. A more crucial point concerning the nature of psychological knowledge concerns the evidence *about* various states of consciousness and the epistemic status of evidence arising *from* the various states of consciousness. The mainstream of contemporary psychology follows the natural science approach in implicitly granting epistemic value only to experience during the wakeful state, ignoring all other states as possible sources of knowledge. Erikson, like Freud before him, accepts dream states and the unconscious as sources of knowledge about persons, especially about the drives and repressed desires and their influence on behavior. This is a significant departure from the established norm of natural science. This is exactly where the many schools of Indian thought such as the Vedānta are significantly different from most schools of Western thought, in that Indian epistemologies are open to insights from the altered states of consciousness.

It should be clear that the epistemic foundation of the Vedāntic views of the self, identity, and reality rests on what the Upaniṣads called the fourth state of consciousness. This is one of the so-called altered states of consciousness and is included in the concept of *samādhi* popular in the varieties of Yoga and other systems of meditation. In the West, it is common to include such states of consciousness under a common label, the "mystical" experience. There is a long tradition of mysticism in the West. Although it is well recognized that there are both secular as well as religious varieties of mysticism (Zaehner, 1957), mysticism has been closely associated not only with Eastern religious traditions, but also with Christianity (Underhill, 1911) and Judaism (Scholem, 1941). In *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* William James (1902/1958) discussed the nature of mystical experiences in detail. Although this book earned a good deal of popularity, its topic has remained singularly unpopular in psychology. Apart from Carl Jung (1958, 1978), who wrote extensively about religion and Eastern mystical traditions, and Abraham Maslow (1964/1970b), who described the nature of "peak experiences," not many prominent psychologists published writings on this topic. It is only in the later phase of his thinking, when he was in his late 70s, that Erikson turned to the Biblical sources of insights on the nature of the *I* and showed some inclination toward mysticism. As we saw earlier, even Skinner, who in his scientific writings never even remotely recognized the relevance of religion, spiritual values, or mysticism for psychology, spoke of them only in his late 70s. I have heard my North American colleagues in psychology poking fun at such turning to religion or mysticism in old age as a sign of senility. At any rate, altered states of consciousness emerged as a topic of some interest in the United States in the late 1960s and the early 1970s (Tart, 1969). But this interest was associated with turning to the mystic traditions of the East in the heady days of the Vietnam War and psychedelic drugs and has been marginalized in psychology today.

Altered states of consciousness and varieties of mystical experience are relevant to psychology primarily because of their relevance to self-knowledge. Their neglect by psychologists cannot entirely be blamed on prevailing prejudices against religion or mysticism. An additional factor is that in the West, the so-called mystical experience or altered states of consciousness are not viewed as reproducible, and hence claims in regard to the attainment of a certain kind of self-knowledge are not considered verifiable. As we noted in connection with both the Kantian and Eriksonian views of the self as a Pure Ego or transcendental center of awareness, their nonverifiable nature poses an obstacle to their acceptability. By contrast, as can be seen from the foregoing account of the Advaita Vedanta, a stepwise procedure that is supposed to lead to the fourth state of consciousness is described in well-known and widely available texts. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Yogic techniques are also well laid out and literature on Yoga is widely available around the world. Interested persons with adequate preparation can in principle follow the prescribed steps and check for whether or not altered states are experienced as described by such texts. In addition, practical instruction has been available to interested and deserving inquirers through teachers (gurus) trained in a long, unbroken chain of teachers and students. That the Advaita Vedāntic and Yogic claims regarding the nature of the Self-Ātman or Puruṣa- are in principle falsifiable goes a long way in providing strength to the epistemological underpinnings of both of their approaches.

The Vedāntic approach to self-knowledge is clearly an outcome of a long tradition of the *contemplative* search for enlightenment that flourished in the Indian subcontinent, while its Western parallel was overshadowed by the rational empiricist approach of the European Enlightenment. By contrast, the Eriksonian approach to identity developed in a joint academic and clinical context nurtured by the post-Enlightenment view of knowledge and the Freudian era of psychotherapy. While in the academic context the implicit guiding principle was knowledge for its own sake, in the clinical context the goal was to relieve the anxieties and other symptoms of mildly and severely disturbed children and youth. Erikson complemented his clinical observations with longitudinal studies of "normal" and bright Harvard undergraduates, plus in-depth interpretive studies of the life histories of several exceptional men, such as Martin Luther, Mahatma Gandhi, and Thomas Jefferson. Having thus covered an exceptionally wide variety of personality types from severely disturbed youth to highly accomplished men over the decades of his long career, Erikson (1981) forayed, in his postretirement writings, into the even higher reaches of human concerns, namely, the existential search for "love, liberation, salvation" (p. 331). It is in this last step of the continuous expansion of his vision that Erikson makes contact with the higher levels of enlightenment that the Vedāntists set their eyes on. Looked at in this way, the Eriksonian and Vedāntic approaches may be seen as mutually complementary, the latter supplementing the upper end of the spectrum of putatively desirable states that the former was try-

ing to reach. The complementarity of the two approaches deserves to be spelled out in some detail.

BECOMING AND BEING: CONTRASTING BUT COMPLEMENTARY MODELS FOR SELFHOOD

Erikson's work on disturbed as well as exceptional persons resulted in a descriptive account and analysis of the passage of persons through the life cycle. His theory provides an account of "lives in progress," to use a phrase popularized by Robert White (1952/1966), a close colleague of Erikson who worked on similar issues. It seems to me that the word "progress" used in this context deserves to be taken rather seriously. Erikson does not use the term progress, but implies a persistent change in persons toward ever higher levels of "positive mental health." Erikson rightly recognizes that the sense of identity is forever revisable, for continual change is an inevitable aspect of living; we are constantly required to define ourselves in the face of the changing situations, whether we like it or not. According to Erikson, it is during late adulthood that many persons face the danger of stagnation, which is the opposite of progress. During old age one must realize that there is not much, if any, time left for progress, and the prospect of despair looms large. The danger of old age, Erikson (1982) warns, is in "mourning not only for time forfeited and space depleted but also ... for autonomy weakened, initiative lost, intimacy missed, generativity neglected- not to speak of identity potentials bypassed or, indeed, an all too limiting identity lived" (p. 63). But let us assume that a person has had several accomplishments to her credit and does not face such a danger. While such a person would avoid a sense of despair, one might ask, would she experience fulfillment? How much progress is enough?

As noted earlier in this chapter, according to Erikson (1974), the awareness of death when we are "deeply young or very old" tends to prompt the question of whether one has lived a wrong life- in service of wrong values, no matter how satisfying the progress might have been in the light of values cherished so far. The Advaita Vedantists exhort that everyone should ask him- or herself this question about the ultimate value worth living for, and urge us to realize the external Being of the *I* that lies beyond the Becoming of the *Me* that is bound to be forever incomplete, whatever be the level of "progress" on any dimension. It is in the stronger valuation of Being and permanence over Becoming and change that the typical Indian perspectives such as Yoga and Vedānta are clearly distinguished from most Western views of personhood. In contemporary psychology, there are two types of contemporary personality theories that emphasize change. First, there are behaviorist theories that view individuals as infinitely malleable entities that change endlessly under the influence of environmental forces, and that deny even stable patterns or traits, let alone admit to anything permanent. Second, there are theories such as those of Maslow (1954/1970a) and Rogers (1961) that propose self-

actualization as a dominant growth principle, which drives individuals to seek the actualization of hidden potentials in the form of successively higher levels of accomplishment in one field or another. It makes sense to see the Eriksonian view of identity formation as a variation on the theme of self-actualization, which in turn implies the value of change over permanence that is strongly expressed as a persistent theme throughout the intellectual history of the West.

Heraclitus was perhaps the first one in the history of Western thought to emphasize change over permanence as a dominant cosmic principle. But the credit for translating this into human terms may go to Aristotle, whose concept of self-actualization implies a continuous actualization of potentials or hidden powers that could manifest themselves in increasingly higher levels of accomplishment. The Heraclitan theme recurs in a number of ways throughout the history of Western thought: in Hegel's view of a perpetual process of cosmic dialectics and of history's relentless march to the progress of human civilization; in the numerous European models of societal progress, well documented by Bury (1932/1960) in his *Idea of Progress;* in the popular conceptions of Darwinian evolution; in the notion of the unidirectional view of time in Time's *Arrow and Evolution* (Blum, 1962); and in Piaget's view of the perpetually evolving universe and of its knowledge. Against the background of such a set of allied themes, all emphasizing change over permanence, it makes sense to view Erikson's idea of human development as a series of unending changes guided by the dialectics of mutually opposing principles such as Trust versus Mistrust interacting with each other like Hegelian Thesis versus Antithesis. The *value* of change over stasis implied in such a view of human life is well expressed by Rogers (1961), who put it this way: "The good life is a *process,* not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination" (p.186). This idea is fairly compatible with the Eriksonian notion of identity formation, a process wherein a person is always looking forward to becoming an anticipated self of some sort or other: an adult while young, being married while single, working while unemployed, and becoming happily retired while still working, and so on. Having a sense of identity, in Eriksonian terms, involves having a sense of direction and continuing to move toward a destination. And happiness, it would seem, lies more in trying than in reaching a destination.

Looked at from an Advaita Vedantic point of view, this is fine as far as the pursuit of three of the four goals of life recommended in the Indian tradition, namely, the performing of one's duties or fulfilling obligations toward others *(dharma, ānṛṇya),* the production or acquisition of wealth *(artha),* and the sating of desires *(kāma).* The fourth goal the tradition recommends is the liberation *(mokṣa)* of the ego from the perpetual chain of action and its inevitable consequences. The twin goals of earning wealth and enjoying life with its means are generally covered by a single Sanskrit term, *abhyudaya,* meaning to rise or to prosper. This term conveys the spirit of what may be called "progress" in English, and its pursuit is considered to be as legitimate as the fulfilling of one's obligations

to others. Although quite legitimate, even mandatory, by traditional standards, such a pursuit is considered to be an unending journey. It is like the pursuit of anticipated selves, to put it in Eriksonian terms. Seen from an Advaita Vedāntic viewpoint, such a pursuit may be likened to chasing a horizon that recedes just as fast as one approaches it. The trouble with the pursuit of anticipated selves or practical goals is that all of these are abandoned either because they are already attained or because they are found unattainable or unworthy and are quickly replaced by other, more attractive, or "higher" goals and corresponding anticipated selves. While such replacement sustains hope for something or other, it also perpetuates the journey; one never arrives. To put it in terms of selfhood, the Eriksonian view of identity formation implies that one keeps on looking for a better and better image of the self, but the anticipated self, once actualized, turns out not to be good enough, or seems *not* to be a "true" self worth hanging on to forever. It is as if one keeps on inventing new self-images without ever discovering the true self. In the process of identity formation described by Erikson, one keeps on not only constructing new images of the self, but also keeps abandoning the self-images once cherished most highly. Abandoning a once-cherished self may be likened to courting symbolic death, while at the same time striving to be symbolically reborn in new incarnations.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, one should escape not only the endless cycle of birth and death across life cycles, but one should also sidestep the symbolic cycle of birth and death of selves or self-images in the course of the present life cycle. The journey to increasingly attractive future selves can and should come to an end with the discovery of the Ātman, the permanent *(nitya)* principle underlying continually changing images of the self. There is then no need for chasing new horizons for selfhood because the Self is, it is claimed, infinitely blissful by nature. Indeed, the discovery of the true nature of the self or Self-realization *(ātma-sākṣātkāra)* is often described as the attainment of *niḥśreyasa,* which literally means "having no better," or the *ultimate* bliss or *final* beatitude. Ironically, this metaphor of the journey is useful but deceptive, for the final abode is also the primal; indeed, insofar as one has always been what one is and will forever be, there is nowhere to *go*. There appears to be a need to travel only insofar as, and as long as, one labors under false conceptions of selfhood. But false images of the self are not easily shed; one does not normally arrive at the final abode suddenly by magic. As noted, an aspirant must acquire all the qualifications that are prerequisite for a proper study of the Ātman–Brahman, and then take the prescribed steps of "listening" or study of the formal principles of the Advaita philosophy and engaging in their critical examination and contemplation. This is a long and arduous task that might take years or decades, and may not be completed even in a lifetime.

During that long period of planned self-transformation, an aspirant must go through the various stages of the life cycle, whether these stages are conceived in

the traditional fourfold Indian way (the student, householder, preparing to retire, and renunciation), or in the eightfold Eriksonian way. Although the Advaita Vedantic aspirant would expect the "journey" to end ultimately, she or he must keep moving along and ostensibly make some "progress" toward the Advaitic goal. During this journey, the aspirant must undergo the same kind of biologically guided transformation of the body that is inevitable for every member of the human species, and must face the same kinds of changing social expectations as others in her or his community and gender would face. It seems to me that, barring its culture-specific or "emic" limitations, the Eriksonian theory may account for the nature of the transformation of the ego that commonly occurs to most people. While Erikson's work offers a descriptive account of the most common process of the transformation of the life cycle and a prescribes ever higher levels of "positive mental health," the Advaita Vedāntic, Yogic, and other such theories offer alternative perspectives on how the transformation of the ego can be guided to a putatively ultimate state of Being beyond Becoming.

Cast as being aimed at the dialectically opposite goals of Becoming versus Being, the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedhtic models might be seen as mutually exclusive approaches that must be taken on an either/or basis. However, treating them in a dichotomous way would be inappropriate. Being and Becoming or sameness and change, like self and other, constitute a dialectical pair such that one defines the other and derives its very meaning from that other. Thus, in Advaita Vedanta, making progress toward self-realization makes sense despite the claim that self-realization implies the attainment of a state beyond progress. So too in the Eriksonian vision, it makes sense to point at the eternal and indescribable "I am that I am" despite its emphasis on endless change. Regardless of their differing emphases on change versus sameness, the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedantic perspectives are complementary.

Notes

1. In the first stanza of the 19th chapter of the verse section of his *Upadeśasāhasrī,* Śaṅkara (1973) uses the following words alluding to a medical metaphor:

   tṛṣṇājvaranāśakāraṇaṁ cikitsitaṁ jnānavirāgabheṣajam |

   For an English translation of the Upadeśasāhasrī, see Potter (1981, pp. 217–254).
2. It is likely that Hall and Lindzey might have decided to delete the chapter of Eastern theories either because of their decision to produce a simpler, lower-level text, or because of the kind of response they received from their peers. A review of 1978 edition of Hall and Lindzey's text illustrates the cold, or even negative, reaction of psychologists to the expansion of the cultural horizons of their text. In a review published in *Contemporary Psychology,* the official review journal of the American Psychological Association, Hochreich (1979) questions Hall and Lindzey's wisdom in including a chapter on an Eastern theory. "Given Hall and Lindzey's stated criteria for selection, the 'importance' and 'distinctiveness' of a theory," sayd Hochreich, "one can easily arrive at more sensible choices" (p. 753).

3. The intellectual background of Erikson's work is available from many good sources: Erikson's (1975) own autobiographical account in his book, *Life History and the Historical Moment* (pp. 17–47),in a biography of Erikson by Robert Coles (1970), and in David Rapaport's (1959) brief introduction to Erikson's *Identity and the Life Cycle.*
4. For a list of the developmental tasks of adolescence in Erikson's own words, see Erikson (1959, p. 112). What is given here is a modified and expanded list in the light of Erikson's own and other works on this topic.
5. Erikson quotes these words from *The Process ofEducation,* by Jerome S. Bruner (1960), a Harvard psychologist well known for his studies in cognition. Although Erikson seems to remain largely within the psychoanalytical framework, his occasional references to the work of cognitivists like Piaget and Bruner indicate, in my opinion, a closer compatibility of his model with cognitive theories than is often realized. It is this link ofhis model with cognitivism that I wish to follow up in the chapter on self-as-knower.
6. Professor James Marcia has pointed out to me (personal communication) that the importance often attached to the role of formal operations in identity formation may be exaggerated. Formal operations might neither be a necessary nor sufficient condition for identity development.
7. See Paranjpe (1975, Ch. 4) for an illustrative case study.
8. According to Professor James Marcia (personal communication), data supporting Eriksonian theory of identity formation have been reported from the following countries: the United States and Canada, Mexico, India, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Kuwait, Israel, South Africa, Nigeria, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Finland, United Kingdom, and New Zealand.
9. Readers acquainted with the history of social psychology would remember that in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950), a landmark study guided by psychoanalytic theory and social psychological methodology, the origins of prejudice were traced to the habitual projection of anger against a disciplining father onto out-groups.
10. For an English translation of Śaṅkara's commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms, see V.M. Apte (1960) or Radhakrishnan (1960/1968).
11. This concise list of features of the essentially indescribable Brahman is a translation of Sarvajñātman's (1972) words in *Saṁkṣepaśārīraka,* stanza No. 173, which are as follows:

    nityaḥ śuddo buddhamuktasvabhāvah |
    satyaḥ sūkṣmaḥ san vibhuścādvitiyah |
    ānandābdhiryaḥ para so' hamasmi |
    pratyagdhāturnātra saṁśītirasti ||

12. For a concise account of the Upanisadic theory of creation, see Vidyāraṇya (1982) Pancadaśī (Ch. 2). or P. Deussen's (1987) *The System of the Vedānta* (Ch. 17).
13. For an English translation, see *Hymns of the Ṛg Veda* (Griffith, 1963, Vol. 2, pp. 575–576).
14. Sometimes a third, still lower, level of reality *(prātibhāsika sattā)* is suggested. It is obtained when something purely illusory, such as a mirage or an event in a dream is taken to be real.
15. In this connection, Dasgupta quotes the following words from Dharmarāja's (1972) *Vedānta Paribhāṣā:* abādhitārthaviṣayajñānatvam (p. 4).
16. This is my paraphrase of the following words of V. S. Abhyankar (1928/1968):

    abādhitarthaviṣayākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛttirhi prametyucyate | (p. 21).

17. Śaṅkara's (1978, 18.66) words in this regard are as follows:

    na hy śrutiśatamapi śīto'gniraprakāśo veti bruvatprāmāṇyamupaiti |
18. These words are used by Radhakrishnan (1927/1931,Vol. 2, p.613) with reference to Sarvajñātman's characterization of *mokṣa,* or liberation, in *Saṁkṣepaśārīraka* (1.67) (see Sarvanjñātman, 1972).
19. I wish to thank Dr. Gaya Charan Tripathi for pointing this out to me.

20. See Note 6, Chapter 2.
21. ātmendriyamanoyuktam bhoktetyāhurmanīṣiṇah | Kaṭha Upanisad (3.4).
22. puruṣo jīvaḥ kṣetrajño bhoktetiparyāyaḥ | (Śaṅkara, 1978, 13.20).
23. māyāṁ tu prakrtiṁ vidyāt | *Svetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (4.10).
24. eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā |
    karmādhyakṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo nirgunasca ||
    Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad (6.11).
25. For an English translation of Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms, see J. H. Woods (1914/1972).
26. The Advaita Vedāntist characterization of the Self as transcending the person as one who knows, feels, and wills appears in many writings. See, for example, Śaṅkara (1978, 13.1 & 13.20; 1980, 1.1.1), and Abhyankar (1928/1968, pp. 19–21).
27. In the *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad (3.1.5), the *ātman* is described as "jyotirmayaḥ," meaning full of light, and in the *Bṛhadaranyaka* (4.3.7), the *puruṣa* is described as "vijñanamayaḥ" and "hṛdyantarjyotiḥ," meaning full of knowledge and a light in the heart.
28. For a detailed discussion of the Advaita Vedānta doctrine of superimposition, see T. M. P. Mahadevan (1985).
29. ko' yamadhyāso nāmeti | ucyate-smṛtirūpah | Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1).
30. Śaṅkara's view of the human condition is movingly expressed in a couple of short poems, the *Dvādaśaparijurikā Stotrum* and the *Carpaṭapañjarikā Stotram.* Therein he expresses his deeply felt disdain for the emptiness of the mundane life and his yearning for a release from saṁsāra For original texts and English translations of these poems, see Mahadevan (1980). In the opinion of S. K. Belwalkar (1929, pp. 221-222), these poems are "very probably" the authentic creations of Śaṅkara.
31. The four major goals of life as envisioned in the Indian tradition are: doing one's duties toward fellow beings *(dharma),* acquiring wealth or means to fulfilling needs and desires *(artha),* fulfilling desires *(kāma),* and seeking release from karmic bondage *(mokṣa).*
32. According to my colleague, Professor lames Marcia (personal communication), an accomplished psychotherapist who read this account in a draft form, "Most real psychotherapy is not 'administered.' Actually [it is] more like this."

4

Self-as-Knower

The Psychology of Cognition

The first part of this chapter is devoted to an overview of prominent contemporary perspectives on self and identity in relation to cognition. The key assumption to be examined here is that the self-as-knower involves the cognitive structures and processes operating within the individual at any given time. In cognitive terms, I *am* the way I get to know the world. The cognitive structures and processes involved in processing information do their work silently, so to speak, meaning that usually we are not aware of them. At a conscious level, the cognitive aspect of the self may be said to involve the beliefs and opinions with which one has become identified. My current beliefs and opinions provide guidelines for me to judge events, issues, and persons that I encounter in daily life. They are also a part of my social identity insofar as my opinions and attitudes define my place in the world around me, and people identify me in terms of my opinions and attitudes. However, cognitive structures and processes, as well as beliefs and opinions, are not acquired and maintained once and for all. They are bound to change from time to time, and hence cannot account for the selfsameness of the *I*.

The second part of this chapter presents the Advaita Vedāntic views of the self-as-knower. First, the Advaita Vedāntic conceptions of knowledge, knower, and known are explained in relation to the Advaita Vedāntic view of reality. This is followed by an interpretation of Advaita Vedāntic views of perception and cognition in the language and idiom of cognitive constructionism. It is pointed out that Advaita Vedantists consider the process of knowing as always in need of adjuncts, or enabling conditions such as sensory capacities, that belong to the person or *jīva*. Since the person keeps changing in relation to the changing world, the self-as-knower must keep changing as well. As such, the Advaita Vedāntists cannot account for the selfsameness of the *I* in terms of the self-as-knower any more than can the cognitive psychologists. However, the Advaita Vedāntists postulate a transcendental Self to account for the selfsameness in persons, and suggest critical self-examination as a means to directly experience it. It is suggested that the self-

examination or "meditation" prescribed by Advaita Vedānta is a way of cognitively "deconstructing" one's ego.

SOME CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES: THE SELF AS COGNITIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) has been one of the most influential figures in the field of cognitive psychology in recent times. His ideas are particularly important for us because, as we shall see later, his view of Being and Becoming (which recognizes only the latter) presents a unique instance of similarity and contrast when compared with the Advaita Vedāntic views of self and cognition. We begin our discussion with a brief outline of Piaget's view of cognition.

PIAGET'S VIEWS OF COGNITION AND THE SELF[1]

Piaget had an exceptionally broad background in diverse disciplines, which he brought to bear on the central issue of his research, *genetic epistemology.* Trained as a biologist, Piaget became interested in philosophy, especially epistemology, along with logic, mathematics, linguistics, cybernetics, systems theory, and developmental psychology. What he presents through a unique combination of such diverse fields of study is a general theory of the structure of natural and artificial (i.e., logicomathematical) systems, conceived as dynamic or "Constructive" processes (Turner, 1973, p. 351). He uses the concept of *structure* to study the origin and growth of knowledge not only in developing human minds, but also in the history of humanity. Piaget argued that since no records are available on how Neanderthal man thought, we are restricted to observing the origin of knowledge in human development rather than in the history of humanity (Piaget, 1970a, p. 13). There is an echo here of the well-known idea from the history of biology: ontogeny *recapitulates* phylogeny. That is to say, an individual's development through the life cycle retraces the same steps that the species may have undergone during the course of its evolution.

There is no need for us to discuss the long history of the theories of evolution and development except for the principle of *epigenesis,* which is central to the developmental theories of Piaget and Erikson. As noted in the previous chapter, this principle suggests that the development of an individual in its life cycle proceeds in a stepwise fashion so that something qualitatively new comes about at each stage. Piaget's work shows how new cognitive structures and processes emerge stage by stage in a manner *analogous* to the biological principle of epigenesis. Moreover, it goes beyond charting the course of cognitive development; it seeks to understand the nature of knowledge as such. What Piaget offers, therefore, is an epistemology. His theory of knowledge differs from traditional

"philosophical'" epistemology in being empirically verifiable. While the traditional epistemologies tend to view knowledge as a fact or a state, Piaget (1970/1972b, p. 2) views it as a *process*. He rejects the empiricist view of knowledge as discovery of something already existing in the external world, and also rejects the rationalist view of knowledge as preexisting in *a priori* form inside the subject. Instead, he views knowledge as a matter of continuous construction "since in each act of understanding, some invention is involved" (Piaget, 1970a, p. 77).

As a process, knowledge originates in the adaptive activity of the individual. The newborn is biologically endowed with formative structures that enable the infant's sensorimotor activities such as sucking, pulling, pushing, and so on. Such activities are repetitive and extend to a wide array of objects and situations such that, in due course, a common underlying pattern or *scheme* is transposed from one situation to another. The infant tends to incorporate or *assimilate* all kinds of new objects encountered in the environment within existing schemes. But in so doing, the original scheme tends to change itself or *accommodate* to a greater or lesser degree. For instance, the pattern of the baby's specific actions in sucking the mother's breast are modified as necessary in sucking a thumb. Piaget (1970b, pp. 707–708) insists that assimilation is never present without its counterpart, accommodation, and that there is always a need to attain an *equilibrium* between the two. Assimilation is essential to provide continuity and stability, but if there is only assimilation and no change, the patterns of action would become rigid and nonadaptive. If, however, accommodation outweighs assimilation, the individual will be too malleable and will be assimilated into the environment. Piaget holds that all organisms are capable of regulating the equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation in the same way that living bodies are able to regulate the rate of metabolism or maintain a balance between production and consumption of sugar and insulin, for instance.

Following a general systems model, Piaget views a hierarchy of nested systems and subsystems at biochemical, cognitive–psychological, and formal or logicomathematical levels, conceiving a continual interplay of processes and structures at each level of organization. Increasingly complex structures are constructed in the ongoing interaction of the self-regulating organism through a continual equilibration of assimilation and accommodation. What drives this process of cognitive construction is the functional activity of the individual manifest in physical movement of limbs and concrete objects at the beginning of life, and gradually transforming into increasingly abstract *operations*. As noted, the structure of activity appears in the beginning in the form of *schemes*, i.e., patterns of sensorimotor activity that are common across situations and objects. From these relatively concrete structures, more abstract forms emerge, starting with elementary *schemata* (plural of "schema"), or simplified mental images, and going on to increasingly abstract signs and symbols. In a series of publications,

Piaget and his associates have provided a detailed account of the stage-by-stage transformation of cognitive functions of growing children from infancy through adolescence. Piaget postulates the following major stages of cognitive development along with substages of each: *sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational,* and propositional, or *formal operational* (see Piaget, 1972a, Ch. 1).

Piaget views "operations" as internalized (i.e., symbolic) *actions.* A child may first learn to subtract by actually taking away and counting concrete objects such as marbles, but she may later learn to substitute imaginary objects or symbols in lieu of real objects in the operation of subtracting. As cognitive development proceeds, operations tend to become increasingly more abstract. At the higher levels of development, the individual is able to perform "operations on operations," e.g., perform classification of classifications or comprehend theories of theorizing. Piaget postulates an invariable sequence of stages and substages of cognitive development analogous to the epigenetic principle, just as Erikson postulates the stages of psychosocial development. The chronological expression of the stages is viewed as contingent on facilitating or nonfacilitating environmental factors. Piaget (1970/1972b, pp. 52–57) claims that the hypothesis of invariable sequence of stages is supported by empirical studies across cultures, and cites evidence from studies conducted around the world.

Here, as in our discussion of Erikson's theory, we will not deal with the issue of empirical validation, but will focus instead on some theoretical and metatheoretical implications of the Piagetian perspective for the study of self and identity. To that end, we need to focus on Piaget's views of the self as subject and object, knower and the known, with particular reference to the issue of change and selfsameness. In *Structuralism,* Piaget (1968/1970c) defines the subject as the "center of functional activity" (p. 69). "[T]he sensori-motor or intelligent subject is active and himself constructs his structures, by operations of reflective abstraction'' (Piaget, 1968/1970c, pp. 59–60) As pointed out by Turner (1973), this means that the subject is the "locus of the dynamics of the constructive process" (p. 357). which is always in flux, engaged as it must be in ongoing assimilation of objects in experience in the existing schema, while at the same time accommodating them as necessary. "The subject exists," says Piaget (1968/1970c), "because … the being of structures consists in their coming to be, that is, their being 'under construction' " (p. 140). This implies that the *subject,* as knower, is always changing. At any given moment it would consist of the cognitive structures and functions that may have evolved in the course of development till that moment. Although Piaget talks of the *object* that the subject must deal with, he does not give a very clear account of it. Turner (1973) infers from Piaget's writings that "[t]he object, insofar as it can be acted upon, and therefore 'known' or related to by the subject, is also an indeterminate entity whose definition is always relative to the actions of the subject and the level of structure upon which they are based" (p. 357).

Such relativistic conceptions of the subject and object, knower and known, would seem too uncertain and risky to someone like Piaget who is interested in an objective, scientific understanding of reality. Given his phenomenological leanings (it was Piaget who taught us how to look at the child's reality from a her or his viewpoint) and his constructionism, Piaget would appear to adopt a subjectivist perspective. But in fact it is quite the opposite. As remarked by Turner (1973): "In spite of the conventional associations of the term 'subject' with the consciousness of individual human beings, it is clear that Piaget's concept of the subject has nothing to do with individuality of consciousnes-or, for that matter, humanity" (p 359). To understand how so, we need to look at Piaget's concept of "epistemic subject" as opposed to a "psychological subject." In the words of Beth and Piaget (1966):

> There is the "psychological subject," centered in the conscious ego whose functional rôle is incontestable, but which is not the origin of any structure of general knowledge; but there is also the "epistemic subject" or that which is common to all subjects at the same level of development, whose cognitive structures derive from the most general mechanisms of the coordination of actions. (p. 308)[2]

In *Structuralism,* Piaget (1968/1970c) suggests that the "general mechanisms" of the coordination of action are common to the "average" subject. "So average, in fact, that one of the most instructive methods for analyzing its actions is to construct, by means of machines or equations, models of 'artificial intelligence' for which cybernetic theory can furnish the necessary and sufficient conditions" (P. 69).

If, indeed, the cognitive constructions of average human subjects could be modeled by machines, the processes of knowing must be universal and *impersonal,* and Piaget (1968/1970c) was aware that his account of a general and impersonal epistemic subject would make the *"subject* disappear" (p. 139). Did Piaget imply that some kind of Kantian universal principles of understanding are at work in the minds of ordinary people? Does he accept the Kantian view of the "I" as an "absolute subject?" Despite his proclaimed sympathy for Kantianism, Piaget does not accept either of these Kantian ideas. As to the transcendental ego, he says that "the whole trouble has been, from Plato to Husserl, that this transcendental subject has been changing appearance all the time bui-with no improvements other than those due to the progress of science" (Piaget, 1967/1971,p. 362). While he is sure about the progress of science, Piaget does not think that it is attained by basing itself on firm "foundations" of any sort. Despite his fascination with formalisms, Piaget repeatedly refers to Kurt Gödel's theorem, which proves that no logico-mathematical system can be self-sufficient or completely internally consistent without subordination to a higher-order system.[3] In Piaget's view, the implication of this is far-reaching: there are no prospects for an absolute or complete system of knowledge — *ever.* To quote Piaget (1970b):

> [L]ogical empiricism attempts to reduce physical knowledge to perceptual states and logicomathematical knowledge to laws of an ideal language.... Now, these are two highly conflicting hypotheses, first, because physical experience rests on actions and not only on perceptions and always supposes a logicomathematical framework drawn from the general coordination of actions (of such kind that operationalism of Bridgman must be completed by that of Piaget!). Second, logicomathematical knowledge is not tautological but constitutes a structural organization drawn from reflective abstraction of the general coordination between our actions and our operations.
>
> But, most importantly, it is impossible that epistemology is static in point of view, because all scientific knowledge is in perpetual evolution, including mathematics and logic itself [of which the constructivist aspect has become evident since the theorems of Gödel have shown the impossibility of a theory to be self-sufficient (complete)— therefore, the necessity of always constructing "stronger" ones; from whence finally the inevitable limits of formalization!] As Natrop[4] said in 1910: "... science evolves continually.... All being (or object) that science attempts to fix dissolves in the current of becoming.... Therefore that which can and must be sought is the law of this process." (Piaget, 1970b. pp. 730–731)

Piaget is absolutely convinced that nothing can be static, immovable, or permanent: no system of knowledge, no transcendental "I," not even God. In *Structuralism,* he says: "But God himself has, since Gadel's theorem, ceased to be motionless. He is the living God, more so than heretofore, because he is unceasingly constructing ever 'stronger' systems" (1968/1970c, p. 141). Like God Himself, what any of us- whether as ordinary persons or as scientists- can do is to perpetually struggle to replace current systems of thought with increasingly "stronger" systems.

A few critical comments on the Piagetian perspective should now be in order. Piaget, like other constructivists, shuns absolutism typical of logical positivism. He views all knowing as conditioned by the state of the knower, as determined by the knower's level of cognitive development in his or her own life and also by the level of development of knowledge in the history of humankind. Piagetian relativism is fairly consistent with that of hermeneutics; both view knowledge as conditioned by "preunderstanding" and also as perpetually open to reinterpretation.

An important problem with the Piagetian approach is its overemphasis on the abstract and generalized processes of knowing in the so-called "epistemic subject" to the *relative* neglect of the relationship between cognition and the self in concrete, personal, and "real life" situations of human beings. Turner (1973, p. 354) rightly suggests that Piaget's theory of "decentered" logical structures must be supplemented by a theory of "recentered" structures belonging to concrete functioning persons. Although impersonal cognitive structures of sorts are conceivable as aspects of artificial intelligence working through advanced computers, in human beings they are lodged with multiple selves united around the center of awareness along with an Eriksonian "sense of identity." But in the analysis of abstract and general cognitive structures presented by Piaget, there is no place for the "person as a whole." Piaget rarely considers the spontaneous, creative individ-

ual, and he seems to ignore the often powerful influence of emotions on human cognitive processes. Such things as the lived experience of human beings, their deeply personal concerns for the unknown future, or their fear of death, are distinctly lacking in Piaget's work. It is no surprise, indeed, that Piaget is rarely recognized as a personality theorist, while Erikson is quite often recognized as such.

Interestingly, Piaget's impersonal stance does not render his view of humans mechanistic like Skinner's. On the contrary, he considers humans as moral agents and has pioneered psychological studies of moral development. However, Piagetian studies of moral behavior would seem to overemphasize cognitive factors, making it appear that resolving moral dilemmas is a matter of "cool" reason. If one takes a Piagetian or Kohlbergian approach to moral behavior, the deeply emotional turmoil of St. Augustine or the existential passion of Kierkegaard would appear to be unnecessary, if not simply pathological.

Looking at the Piagetian perspective cross-culturally, I see the Piagetian versus Kierkegaardian views of moral dilemmas to be an instance of the typical Western polarization along the analytical–existential dimension that is difficult to find within the Indian tradition. I also notice in Piaget's approach the primacy of Becoming over Being. This is not to say that valuing change and Becoming over permanence and Being makes it exclusively "Western." Piaget himself refers to Plato and Husserl- prominent Western advocates of Being- while indicating his preference for Becoming over Being. However, the fact that he criticizes them (rightly or wrongly) for giving "changing visions of the permanent" and that he cites lack of "progress" in rejecting them indicate Piaget's fascination with the idea of progress and his emphasis on Becoming. As noted in Chapter 1, the idea of "progress" has been a pervasive theme of Western civilization; its influence is such that any talk of permanence as a value is viewed with suspicion-even as environmentalists are often branded as "enemies of progress." In any event, I do not see Piaget's view of the continually evolving character of human knowledge of the world as being at odds either with Quinian or Advaita Vedāntic views of knowledge, for both emphasize the openness of such knowledge to falsification. It is, however, at odds with the Advaita Vedāntic view of experience of the *Self,* which they claim as absolute and not evolving. But the experience of the Self is said to be obtained when the flow of ideas in the mind is brought to a standstill. However, the Yogic or Advaita Vedātic ways of knowing the Self by stalling the stream of consciousness would seem odd to Piaget (1967/1971), who once raised the question of "whether one can possibly jump over one's own shadow and thus reach the 'Subject' in oneself without its remaining 'human, too human' " (p. 362).

Neo-Piagetian Views of Self and Identity

Although Piaget did not focus on studies of self and identity, several neo-Piagetian scholars published numerous studies in this area in the 1970s and 1980s.

Prominent in this respect is the work of Kohlberg and Gilligan (1971/1974), Kegan (1982), Harter (1988), and Chandler (Chandler, Boyes, Ball, & Hala, 1987; Ball & Chandler, 1989). A common feature of research in this field is the combination of Piagetian concepts and methods with theories of self and identity derived from James, Cooley, Mead, and Erikson. Instead of discussing the depersonalized Piagetian conception of the "epistemic subject," most neo-Piagetians try to account for the *structures* and *functions* that account for the individuals' conceptions of who they are, or have been. All of them bring to bear considerable amounts of data based on longitudinal and/or cross-sectional studies of the conceptions of the self and identity among children and adolescents. A common feature of the neo-Piagetian studies is a typically constructionist approach that views the conceptions of the self as a matter of "making" or "inventing" meaning rather than discovery of truth.

As can be expected, the various scholars of this group define the self somewhat differently. Kegan, for instance, conceives of a self in a "region" between events and individual reaction to them. It is in such a region that meanings are made, and "[t]he zone of mediation where meaning is made is variously called by personality psychologists the 'ego,' the 'self,' the 'person' " (Kegan, 1982, pp. 2–3). The typical Piagetian view of cognition or knowledge as "activity" or process is quite apparent in most neo-Piagetian studies. But, one might ask, whose activity is it and what does it produce? Although Kegan does not pose such questions, Harter (1988, p. 44) implicitly answers them by conceiving the self as both the *constructor* and *constructed,* and by considering them to be the counterparts, respectively, of the Jamesian "I–self," or self-as-knower, and the "Me-self," or the self-as-known. Although the neo-Piagetians occasionally talk about the subject and the object even as Piaget did, they do not tend to make too fine a distinction between self-as-subject and self-as-object. It is quite common among them, however, to refer to the self in the dual sense of cognitive structure *and* function, implying, respectively, the known and the knower. The neo-Piagetians seem to take for granted Piaget's idea of the incessant equilibration of the cognitive processes of assimilation and accommodation, and thereby assume that the self is always in the making. For instance, Kegan chooses the expression "the evolving self," suggesting the constantly changing nature of the self, and schematically represents the process of change as an endless spiral or a helix. Given such assumptions of a constantly changing selfhood, how do neo-Piagetians account for selfsameness?

Both Chandler and Harter address this issue most directly in terms of the Piagetian notion of *conservation.* As Piaget's famous studies show, children at an early age often think that if one pours liquid from a tall, narrow beaker into a shorter one, it decreases in amount. However, in the course of their cognitive development they begin to understand that, despite the "transformation" in shape, the amount of liquid remains the same, or is "conserved." This Piagetian finding

suggests the hypothesis that children learn to infer the continued sameness of persons in an analogous manner as something conserved despite transformation of sorts, such as a quantity of water poured from a tall glass to a short one. To test such a hypothesis, Chandler and associates (1987) asked children to say whether Scrooge,[5] portrayed *differently* as a comic strip character in his Christmas Eve and Christmas Day incarnations, was the *same* person before and after. Most children judged him to be the same person, although their accounts of sameness varied according to their level of cognitive development. While preoperational children inferred sameness on the basis of bits and pieces that remained unchanged ("he is the same Scrooge because he wears the same clothes," or "has the same looks"), concrete operational subjects inferred sameness in terms of some causal consequence (a kernel of goodness simply germinated overnight, for instance).

In her studies, Susan Harter (1988) tries to explain how children going from elementary school to junior high school often attempt to conserve their self-esteem by changing either their competence hierarchies (e.g., by trying to raise their performance levels where they discover shortcomings) or their importance hierarchies (by considering the areas of deficiency to be less important). Thus, what is involved in the maintenance of a sense of selfsameness is the construction and continual reconstruction of selfhood. Ball and Chandler (1989) found that adolescents differ widely in the way they construct a sense of selfsameness. There are significant *qualitative* differences across individuals in the grounds on which claims of continuity in themselves as persons are based. For instance, psychiatrically hospitalized adolescents generally gave less mature warrants of personal continuity than those in a matched sample of "normal" adolescents. At the same time, adolescents from comparable backgrounds who were judged as high risk for suicide were "generally at complete loss as to how to justify the conclusion of their own or others' persistent identity across time" (Ball & Chandler, 1989, p. 272). Ball and Chandler are rightly cautious in interpreting their data, noting that their correlational studies cannot indicate what "causes" suicidal tendencies among adolescents. Nevertheless, their observations are highly suggestive of the existential significance of the attainment of a reasonable basis of selfsameness; its lack may in some instances lead to dreadful doubts regarding one's continued existence as a person in the future.

By way of critical comment it may be noted that the neo-Piagetian accounts such as those indicated above are suggestive of William James's conclusion that "the identity found by the *I* in its *me* is only a loosely construed thing, just like that which any outside observer might find in the same assemblage of facts" (James, 1890/1983, p. 352). In other words, what the neo-Piagetian studies try to demonstrate is not the continued existence of the self-as-subject; they simply describe the various types of processes that are commonly involved in the attempts of a continually changing "knower" (i.e., the existing cognitive structures) in making sense of the ever-changing world. What they account for is not the selfsameness of

the self-as-knower but the "conservation" of various aspect of the self-as-known. Indeed, the neo-Piagetian studies effectively demonstrate that neither the self-as-knower nor the self-as-known are permanent. While the former is assumed to be necessarily and continually changing on theoretical grounds, the continual changes in the latter is a fact of commonplace observation. Moreover, what the neo-Piagetian studies show is that the sense of selfsameness is not only cognitively constructed, it is based on frequently changing grounds that are often more like rationalizations than reasons.

Broughton and Riegel (1977) make an interesting observation about the Piagetian developmental theorists against the background of their intellectual history: "Such theorists follow Hegel's assumption that the real is rational consciousness, and that development is the development of thought. Development is in fact taken as the defining quality of life and of the human self" (p. 156). Given the fusion of Hegelian and Darwinian thought in the work of Mead, Baldwin, Dewey, and other similar theorists of the early 20th century, they point out that: "Self-as-Organism is a precarious identity -in-difference. Self and Development are in constant tension, since the Self is viewed as existing only in its own self-negation- in its Becoming rather than its Being" (Broughton & Riegel, 1977, p. 156). They also point out that the "final stage" of cognitive development and moral reasoning as conceived by Piaget and Kohlberg gives an illusory impression of stability. It is illusory because, inasmuch as Piaget accepts Gödel's proof of incompleteness of all formal and axiomatic systems of thought, the " 'Final' stages must ... always stand as provisional" (p. 156). To put it in different words, in Piagetian and neo-Piagetian approaches, the self, as both the knower and known, is seen as necessarily subject to continual changes, and as such, the issue of sameness remains elusive.

To put this into the context of Advaita Vedānta, it may be noted that Advaita Vedāntists insist that the self as both knower and known changes, even as the neo-Piagetian studies imply. They dismiss the impression of sameness in the self-as-known as illusory; the cognitive "conservation" of the *me* is for them a rationalization rather than a reasoned fact. The Advaita Vedāntists account for the sameness of the self in terms of the self-as-subject that is experienced in the transcognitive zone of consciousness- a territory that seems to be out of bounds for Piaget and most Piagetians.

George Kelly: The Self as "Personal Construct"

George Kelly (1905–1967) did not approve of the traditional trichotomy of cognition, conation, affect, nor did he consider his theory to be phenomenological (Kelly, 1969, pp. 69,219). Yet his approach is often considered phenomenological, since it emphasizes the individuals' perspective on reality as the most significant determiner of action (see Kelly, 1969, pp. 270–271). He is also considered a

cognitive constructivist insofar as the notions of "construal" and "construction" central to his theory refer to what are usually called cognitive processes. As noted in Chapter 1, Kelly (1955) is a realist and a constructive alternativist in that he holds that the "universe is really existing" (p. 6), and that "there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world" (p. 15). He is one of the very few contemporary theorists who state their axioms and their corollaries clearly and up front. Kelly's fundamental postulate is that "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the way he *anticipates* events, and its first corollary is that 'a person anticipates events by *construing* their replications' " (p. 103, emphasis added). Construing is always guided by *dichotomous* "constructs," or reference axes, that allow us to compare and contrast events with each other and thereby help make sense of the world (Kelly, 1969, p. 295). The reference axes or constructs like "self versus other," "my self versus my ideal self," "probable versus impossible," "safe versus dangerous," or "good versus evil," for instance, allow a person to place events in reference to oneself, assess their desirability, and thereby help prepare their prediction and control. For Kelly, the prediction and control of events is a goal common to scientists as well as "ordinary" persons, and science and personal constructs are its means. Personal constructs, like constructs of the various sciences, are applicable only to a finite range of events rather than to reality as a whole, and "all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision and replacement" (Kelly, 1955, p. 15).

As in the case of the Piagetian schemata, the Kellyian constructs are always in the making. In facing a new situation, such as making a new acquaintance, individuals tend to "circumspect," or look around, and invoke a wide range of familiar constructs, a host of bipolar trait names like "warm versus cold," or "friendly versus hostile," for instance, to assess whether the person is likely to be congenial or harmful, and so on. Those constructs that seem obviously useless in framing the situation are ruled out or "preempted," and the framework of selected constructs is then used as the basis for exercising control on own behavior, such as either neglecting the newcomer or inviting her for a party next week, as might seem appropriate. As life events unfold, a person's construction of the surrounding world is continually revised in cycles of *circumspection* (exploring and construing alternatives), *preemption* (ruling out some alternatives as irrelevant), and control (as per chosen alternatives). If the personal constructs prove adequate in controlling relevant events in the light of results of past construal and action, the individual may "tighten" or consolidate the framework, or perhaps "loosen" it so as to make it open to revision. The parallel between this Kellyian account of the processes of construal and the Piagetian concepts of assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration should be quite clear.

Kelly was opposed to the conceptualization of an entity such as an ego or a self. But he speaks of the self as both a construct or frame for comparing items and as a datum or an item to be rated in the context of other constructs (Kelly, 1955, p.

131). Thus, insofar as "self" or self-related terms often provide dichotomous axes (like "self versus nonself," or "self versus other") for the assessment of events, the self can be thought of as a construct. On the other hand, self can equally be one among the many persons or "data" that one evaluates on dichotomous constructs like "warm versus cold," "intelligent versus unintelligent," "honest versus dishonest," and so on. The self is not just one construct among innumerable others we employ in our understanding; it is one of the "core" constructs, a stable and deeply entrenched one rather than a peripheral one, open to quick and repeated revision. Says Kelly (1955): *"Core constructs are those which govern a person's maintenance processes*- that is, *those by which he maintains his identity and existence"* (p. 482; italics original). What this implies is that the self and other such core constructs *define* who one is; indeed, they *are* the person. Kelly (1955, p. 482) notes that in healthy persons, the core constructs are comprehensive, i.e., applicable to a wide variety of known events relevant to them, but not too "permeable," i.e., not too loose, inconsistent, tenuous, or excessively encompassing (p. 80). As a result, healthy persons can see themselves as complex and organized persons, and can precisely evaluate new events without overestimating their significance, as hypochondriacal or paranoid persons often do. Indeed, Kelly (1955) views mental health as a matter of correct or valid construal of events; a psychological disorder is defined as "a personal construction which is used repeatedly in spite of consistent invalidation" (p. 831). A simple example is that of a paranoid who holds to the belief that everyone is trying to get him in trouble, despite repeated evidence to the contrary.

This view of psychological disorder leads to the characterization of psychotherapy as an "aid to reconstruction" (Kelly, 1955, p. 937). Kelly fashions the task of reconstruction on the "... modem science model. Constructs are hypotheses. Prediction is the goal" (p. 940). In the day-to-day life of ordinary persons, as in science, the world is always open to alternative constructions, so one always should be on the lookout for better, more functional constructions that allow us to more accurately predict the events around us. Insofar as the patient's difficulties are most likely to stem from erroneous constructions, the therapist asks the patient first to take stock of how he or she sees things in relation to the world, to carefully examine the current constructions, then to think of alternative hypotheses and try them out in real life for a while, even as a scientist experimentally tests new hypotheses. To that end, specific methods are developed. For instance, the client is asked to write a "self-characterization," a descriptive account of how a friend might describe him. If he most commonly describes persons including himself in terms of the "kindly versus hostile" dimension, the therapist asks him to move back and forth on the continuum between the two poles. This kind of movement between poles may help the client realize perhaps that he is "kind" while things are going well and tends to become "hostile" when they are not. Such *contrast construction* often helps the client clarify to himself the way he sees himself and

himself and others and bring about greater internal consistency in his construct system (Kelly, 1955, pp. 938–939). The therapist then starts to introduce new elements in the construction system, suggesting alternative dimensions to construe the events of the client's concern, for instance. In a special technique called fixed-role therapy, a script for an alternate way of playing his role as employee or family member is prepared in consultation with the client and one or two collaborating therapists, and the client is encouraged to try this reconstructed way of construing and acting (Kelly, 1955, Ch. 8; Rychlak, 1981, pp. 739–741).

The theoretical underpinnings of Kelly's approach should now be clear. Briefly, Kelly sees the self as a matter of cognitive construction, both as a core construct that shapes the way in which events are assessed and a datum assessed in the light of existing constructs. In other words, the self is both knower and known, interpreter and interpreted. Both as datum and interpretive framework, the self is always considered open to reconstruction. In the later part of this chapter, I shall try to use the Kellyian model of theory and psychotherapy in interpreting Advaita Vedāntic theory and method for self-realization. At this point, let us turn to a brief account of selected contemporary perspectives on the self that focus on cognitive concepts such as schema.

Conceiving of the Future Selves: Hazel Markus's Approach

In a series of publications, Hazel Markus and her associates (Markus, 1977, 1983; Markus & Nurius, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987) have conceptualized the self as a cognitive schema, and have tried to account for its role in conceiving of the future states as well as in directing ongoing behavior. Markus's conceptualization of cognitive schema follows the pioneering work by Frederic Bartlett (1932), and the seminal contributions of Piaget (1951) and Kelly (1955). Markus (1977) defines self-schemata as "cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information" (p. 64). In her initial studies, Markus (1977) experimentally demonstrated that self-schemata facilitate the processing of information about the self, give confidence in predicting their own future behaviors, and resist counterschematic information. In the light of her own and other empirical studies, she tried to show how self-schemata shape the perceiver's expectations, determine the way in which a situation is framed or interpreted, and selectively influence attention (Markus, 1983). An important aspect of her work is concerned with the potential or possible selves, i.e., conceptions of the self in future states (Markus & Nurius, 1987). The future selves may be positive states hoped for, such as a rich and famous self that is esteemed and revered by others, or a feared self sick, unemployed, penniless, and unloved. The construction of future selves is thus inextricably associated with affective states like hope and fear, and accordingly guides one's course of action so as to avoid undesirable future states and to attain the desirable ones. The connec-

tion pointed out by Markus between the cognitive construction of the self on the one hand and the emotion and action on the other is important in the study of the self. We shall discuss the nature of this connection wherever relevant in the following chapters.

For decades, "self-concept" was conceptualized in psychology as if it were a static, measurable entity of which a single aspect, namely self-esteem, could predict global aspects of behavior such as delinquency, academic achievement, or marital adjustment. In their survey of the more recent trends in research, Markus and Wurf (1987, p. 300) note that the tendency now is to view self-concept as a "dynamic interpretive structure" that mediates a variety of intrapersonal processes (such as information processing, affect, and motivation) as well as interpersonal processes (such as perception of and responses to other people). Also, self-concept is considered to be a multifaceted phenomenon including images, cognitive schemata, and prototypes with which to compare new stimuli, as well as an ensemble of theories, goals, and tasks. According to Markus, what operates within the individual at a given time is a "working self" concept—a particular configuration of representations drawn from the self-concept that regulates ongoing action. At any given time, particular aspects of the overall self-concept that are relevant to the situation on hand (self-as-parent and one's parenting skills in dealing with one's child, for instance) might be drawn into action so as to influence information processing and control of action relevant to the situation.

Thus conceived, the working self implies a system of switching from one Jamesian self (or role) to another appropriate one as demanded by the changing situation. To help understand what is involved here, visualize a homemaker switching several times among a repertoire of selves—mother, wife, cook, consumer, neighbor, grandmother—in a short period depending on who calls for attention at the moment. The concept of a working self suggests the fully dynamic nature of the self; it implies an ensemble of cognitive structures and processes in continual action, an ensemble that not only monitors the changing events in the world around, but also is self-correctively "in the making," as with all Piagetian schemata.

From the foregoing account it should be clear that Markus's "dynamic self-concept" is both a structure and process, stable and yet malleable. It illustrates the contemporary trend to avoid the tendency typical of the mid-20th-century psychology to conceptualize the self as either structure or process, either stable or malleable. It also illustrates a tendency to avoid the compartmentalization of psychological processes into cognition, emotion, and action, but rather to emphasize their interconnectedness. Markus's concept of "future selves," for instance, implies not simply a cold, rational anticipation of future possibilities, but also the experiencing of the fear or hope they engender. Such emotions in turn imply that one is prompted to set appropriate goals and initiate action so as to help allay fears

or to realize positive outcomes. This latter idea suggests the agentic nature of the self, which will be discussed in a separate chapter.

The Totalitarian Ego: A. G. Greenwald's Contributions

In an article published in 1980, Anthony G. Greenwald argued that the ego is an organization of knowledge characterized by totalitarian strategies of information control. He refers to the earlier publications of Seymour Epstein (1973) and Jane Loevinger (1976) that explain how and why the ego can be viewed as an organization of knowledge. Following Loevinger, Greenwald conceives of and compares the organization of knowledge at three different levels: belief systems of individual persons, political ideologies shared by party members, and scientific theories shared by communities of scholars. He suggests that the organization of knowledge at all three levels manifest the following common features: a conservative tendency (i.e., a tendency to sustain or protect the presently held beliefs) and a tendency to ignore or reject information contrary to current beliefs. In support of this thesis, Greenwald refers to the work of George Orwell (1949) and Hanna Arendt (1966) on the nature of totalitarian ideologies, and of Thomas Kuhn (1970) on the nature of scientific theories, and marshals data from numerous studies by experimental and cognitive psychologists on information processing. In addition, Greenwald presents several poignant illustrations from day-to-day life showing how people often accept only what fits their presently held beliefs, ignore or dismiss contrary evidence, and even fabricate stories to rationalize even the most ludicrous views of themselves or of events around them. Since Greenwald has presented a persuasive set of arguments based on review of a considerable amount of evidence from numerous published studies, I shall leave it to the interested reader to decide whether Greenwald's conclusions are reasonable. Here, I would simply abstract some of his key observations regarding the nature of the ego as an illustration of a prominent contemporary perspective, and examine its theoretical and practical implications that would be relevant for a cross-cultural comparison of perspectives.

According to Greenwald, the ego's cognitive functioning manifests the following three types of biases: egocentricity (the self as focus of knowledge), "beneffectance" (a neologism for the tendency toward the perception of responsibility for desired, but not undesired, outcomes), and cognitive conservatism (resistance to cognitive change). Egocentricity implies the common tendency to remember the past "as if it were a drama in which the self was the leading player" (Greenwald, 1980, p. 604). One need not go very far for an illustration; I need only to recall how, when my colleague asked me about the office meeting that he had missed the other day, I gave an account primarily of what I said in it and of my opinions of what others said. Another aspect of egocentricity is to view the self as

"the axis of cause and effect," such that one tends to have an illusion of control over events that depend only on chance, as in choosing a lottery ticket, for instance. On the other hand, one also tends to view the self as the intended target of other people's action, a tendency common in paranoia. "Beneffectance" is the tendency to see oneself as cause of only the desirable events, such as success in an examination, and to pass the blame for failure to external factors, such as a poor teacher, or bad luck. Cialdini and his associates (1976) have coined the term "basking in reflected glory" (BIRGing) to designate the common tendency to identify with winners so as to share their glory, only to disown them in case they lose. For example, in their study it was noted that college students often said *"we* won" whenever the college team won a game, but switched to *"they* lost" when it was defeated. Group pride and ethnocentrism are often a form of BIRGing; even scholars sometimes secretly wish to indicate that they are great because their ancestors were highly accomplished, wise, or the first ones in the world to come up with a significant idea, and so on.

Cognitive conservatism is a pervasive bias. As noted, it is common to the organization of knowledge at different levels: at the level of personal worldviews, in widely shared religious or political ideologies, as well as in scientific paradigms. Conservatism implies resistance to change or to revise currently held ideas in the light of contrary evidence. To put it in Piagetian terms, this implies an excess of assimilation over accommodation. Greenwald notes that, at the individual level, cognitive conservatism manifests in many forms: in a tendency to ignore or reject persuasive messages counter to the then-favored opinions; to reconstruct or "re-write" memories so as to justify current feelings and attitudes (Bartlett, 1932, pp. 206–207); to seek out information and the company of people who would support the current beliefs; or to believe that the present is better than the past, and that the future will be better still, and so on.

A few years after the publication of Greenwald's paper on the totalitarian ego, Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) published a historical overview of psychological perspectives on the self. Some aspects of their review are pertinent to our discussion, and will be briefly noted here. One that pertains to the self-as-knower is the idea that the self is an existing cognitive structure or a "prototype." On the basis of the work of T. B. Rogers (1981) and other researchers, Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) suggest that "the self concept functions as a cognitive prototype — a category or central tendency with which novel stimuli can be compared" (p. 149). Without going into the details of experimental evidence that is cited in support of this view, some of its implications for selfhood may be examined. To put it in broader and more general terms than those suggested by Greenwald and Pratkanis, the existing cognitive structures constitute the self-as-knower. These include the entire range of cognitive schemata that operate within an individual at a given time, as well as one's explicitly or implicitly held beliefs, values, principles, guidelines, and so on that define one's position on relevant issues and guide one's behavior

in daily life. All these are products of one's prior history and cognitive development. The current beliefs and values may have replaced different and even opposite ones held before, and may well be open to revision in the future. But as present or existing cognitive structures, they are the truths to the best of one's knowledge, and they are *the* standards by which the world must be judged and the course of action decided. One may not be explicitly and consciously aware of all the existing cognitive structures, nor have the ability to use them in a cool, affectively neutral, and "rational" manner. Nevertheless, the *I,* as a knower, *is* the means of knowing (such as existing cognitive structures and functions) available to oneself at the moment.

Another aspect of Greenwald and Pratkanis's overview of the self-concept is their discussion of the traditional knower–known distinction in contemporary idiom. Putting it in the language of artificial intelligence, they view the distinction between self-as-knower and self-as-known as analogous to the distinction between "procedural" and "declarative" knowledge. These, in turn, are analogous to cognitive process versus product or content, respectively. In terms of computer metaphor, subject and object are viewed as program and data aspects of the computer, respectively (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984, p. 142). Greenwald and Pratkanis quote Ulric Neisser (1976), who also uses the computer metaphor to describe a cognitive schema. Says Neisser (1976):

> a schema is like a *format* in a computer-programming language. Formats specify that the information must be of a certain sort if it is to be interpreted coherently. Other information will be ignored or will lead to meaningless results.... A schema is not merely like a format; it also functions as a plan ... The schema is not only the plan but also the executor of the plan. (pp. 55–56)

The similarity between such conceptualization and Markus's self as both structure and process should be obvious. What this implies is that the self-as-knower, viewed as "executor" of a plan or as process, cannot be static, but is active and therefore a continually changing phenomenon, although it generally tends to be "conservative" or resistant to change in its structure or form.

Greenwald and Pratkanis point out some theoretical implications that follow from such new metaphors. They point out that both program and data are represented as bits in random access memory, and that the distinction between program and data is not a sharp one. "[T]he fuzziness of the program versus data distinction captures an essential aspect of the distinction between self as knower and self as object of knowledge" (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984, p. 142). In addition to this theoretical difficulty in making a sharp distinction between the self as knower and known, Greenwald and Pratkanis note a methodological difficulty in studying them. It is concerned with the "introspective access," in that "we have access to the *products* of cognitive process, but not to the *workings* of the cognitive process" (p. 142, emphasis added). This difficulty can be easily and quickly noted by anybody in an attempt to specify what exactly went through one's mind just

moments ago. It arises partly from the rapidity with which cognitive processes arise in and vanish from the stream of consciousness, and has been discussed by William James, among others.

In his inimitable style, James uses distinctive metaphors to describe the "baleful" difficulty in watching one's own thought processes: "The attempt at introspective analysis is in fact like seizing a spinning top to catch its motion, or trying to turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks" (James, (1890/1983, p. 237). The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (6.34) describes the same difficulty with a different metaphor: The mind is so fickle, says Arjuna, trying to curb it is like holding the wind. James (1890/1983) quotes Auguste Comte, who had pointed out another important difficulty in knowing the knower: "The thinker cannot divide himself into two, of whom one reasons while the other observes him reason. The organ observed and the organ observing being, in this case, identical, how could observation take place?" (p. 188). Yājñavalkya the ancient Upaniṣadic sage, noted pretty much the same dilemma when he said "Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All? Lo, whereby would one understand the understander?" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upanisad, 2.14.14). Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984, p. 144) note the same dilemma regarding the subject–objectduality, but express it differently with the help of the metaphor of mirrors in a barber shop suggested by Ernest Hilgard. If we try to identify which image is seeing and which is seen, says Hilgard (1949), "it soon gets all confused as to the self that is doing the looking and the self which is being look at" (p. 377).

While commenting on Hilgard's observations Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) blame the mirror metaphor for adding confusion to the enigma of subject–object duality. They then refer to other metaphors such as "the DNA molecule that contains instructions for its own replication and Gödel's theorem that asserts its own unprovability," (pp. 143-144) suggested by Douglas Hofstadter (1979). Although Greenwald and Pratkanis find these metaphors to be "more substantial and more stimulating" than the mirror metaphor, they conclude that such metaphors "leave the experienced duality of the self a mystery, and thereby encourage the suspicion that the self as subject/knower is beyond the domain of scientific treatment" (p. 144). Their use of the metaphor of the computer program, they hope, will bring the self-as-knower within the domain of empirical psychology. Be that as it may, the selected aspects of the views of Greenwald and Pratkanis noted in this section have interesting parallels as well as opposites in Indian thought that need to be pointed out.

In regard to the "egocentrism" and "beneffectance" of the ego, some parallel notions from the *Bhagavad-Gītā* may be noted. According to the *Gītā* (18.13–14) there are five factors that account for the accomplishment of all actions: the context of action, the agent, the instruments of various sorts, various kinds of effort, and finally, chance or fate *(daiva)*. Of these, the agent egotistically considers him- or

herself as the sole cause of action, neglecting the contributing factors. Such egotism, according to the *Gītā* (3.27), is a sign of the lack of understanding. To put it in contemporary idiom, this is a common "attribution error," which Greenwald accounts for in terms of the ego's "beneffectance." Despite this parallel between the Advaita Vedantic and Greenwaldian views of the ego, however, the two are different in a most significant way. Greenwald's analysis, like that of most contemporary psychologists, is impersonal and theoretical, while the typical Advaita Vedāntic approach would be to carry forward its theoretical analysis to the personal and practical realm. Let me speculate on how someone involved in a Advaita Vedāntic variety of personal self-examination might view egocentrism and cognitive conservatism noted by Greenwald:

> If Greenwald's observations about egocentrism and cognitive conservatism are accurate and widely applicable, am I immune to such foibles? I must recognize that I often find myself clinging on very dearly to my current beliefs and opinions, and tend to ignore or disregard evidence to the contrary. Greenwald is right when he says that one often tends "to believe that the present is better than the past, and that the future will be better still." I *do* very often think that what I know now is better than what I knew before. By the same token, I must grant that my future ways of knowing will be better still. But when I say that, am I not forgetting that what I know now is only a relative and provisional truth at best? Have I not often found myself to be dead wrong on important issues in the past, and have subsequently converted myself to the opposite side? And yet I continue to think, so very often, that I am right and those opposed to me must be wrong. Isn't that a sign of what Greenwald has called a "totalitarian ego?" What are the lessons that I must learn from this?

This sort of personal self-examination is deeply shunned in an intellectual atmosphere shaped in the impersonal and purist tradition of Greek *theoria*. We may recall Husserl's exaltation of this purist tradition and the denigration of Indian thought for its practical and moral concerns. It is not of course the practical use of psychology or any other science that is the question, for that is not only permitted but exalted. But in the Western cultural milieu, practical application of knowledge is rarely advocated in a personal way as it has been in Yoga, Advaita Vedānta, and other such systems of the Indian tradition. We may recall here Piaget's emphasis on a decentered, impersonal epistemic subject, and Turner's criticism about Piaget's lack of inclination to "recenter" the knower in the banal human and personal context. Turner's criticism of Piaget reflects a tension between personal and impersonal stances that is rarely expressed in Western psychology.

Harré's Social Constructionist View of the Self

In *Personal Being,* Rom Harré (1983) has proposed a *social constructionist* view of the self and identity that is significantly different from any of those

considered above. Several crucial aspects of his perspective may be noted: (1) being a philosopher rather than a psychologist, Harré focuses more on theory than on empirical research; (2) he rejects the notion of humans as the high-grade automata often implicit in cognitive science and in North American social psychology, and considers them to be agents responsible for their own actions; and (3) Harré considers persons as cultural artifacts rather than natural objects, and follows G. H. Mead and Lev Vygotsky in assuming that individual minds are "structured and stocked from a social and interpersonal reality" (p. 8). Like Mead, Harré suggests that selves originate from conversation with others, and following Wittgenstein, he tries to show how the self is structured by the "language games" in which the individual participates.

According to Harré (1983), "[t]o be psychologically an individual is to be self-conscious and self-activating and controlling. The former includes a knowledge of one's history as well as one's unique location in the array of persons" (p. 23). In Harré's view, "person" is "the socially defined, publicly visible embodied being, endowed with all kinds of powers and capacities for public, meaningful action." The "self [is] the personal unity I take myself to be, my singular inner being, so to speak. The self, in this sense, is that for which Hume searched, but which he could not find" (1983, p. 26). Thus, unity and singularity are fundamental properties of selfhood *by definition.* Moreover, Harré speaks of selfhood as a "unity of unities" (1983, p. 29), and considers it at three related but distinct levels: (1) a *formal* unity in terms of the "centered" nature of consciousness; (2) a *practical* unity of the self as agency, or locus of action in an array of persons; and (3) an *empirical* unity, suggestive of a single "point of view" moving along a spatiotemporally continuous path, as it were, so that experiences of a lifetime can be organized as the narrative of a "truly one and only one distinct individual" (1983, p. 205).

For Harré (1983, p. 193), unity of self is a theoretical concept and not an empirical discovery. He believes that selves are constructed (1983, p. 27), and that unities of selfhood are artifacts (p. 22). In accepting that selves are not empirically observable entities, Harré agrees with Hume. He also endorses Kant's view that "unities of experience are accounted for through application of the doctrine of synthesis." Harré explicitly states that "[i]n the Kantian view, the experienced unities of personal being are actively created out of an undifferentiated continuum of experience. I believe Kant's solution to be essentially right" (1983, p. 15).

Although Harré considers his project to be Kantian in view of his agreement of the point just mentioned, he sharply differs from Kant in some important ways: "Contrary to Kant, who held that transcendental objects had only transcendental properties, I hold that at least some important transcendental objects have social properties" (1983, p. 22). Harré's emphasis on society stands in contrast with the "individualist psychologies," such as Freudian psychoanalysis, Piagetian cognitivism, and Daniel Dennett's (1978) "cognitive science." He faults individualist

psychologies for at least the following problems, among several others: (1) their difficulty in explaining how intersubjectivity and knowledge of other minds are possible (1983, p. 8), and (2) their failure in explaining personhood as a psychological unity (p. 10). Like G. H. Mead, Harré considers the symbiotic interactions among a collectivity of human beings as a fundamental reality, and locates the origin of mind in human conversation. He recognizes that for collectivists like Mead and Vygotsky, "the deepest problem is how individuality is created and sustained in so thoroughly social a world" (1983, p. 8). Solving this problem is precisely the challenge Harré (1983) undertakes in *Personal Being.*

The basic premise of Harré's social constructionist approach is that "cognitive activities are primarily public and collective, located in talk. They become personal activities of individual people by developmental processes of the kind ... by which we come to learn to talk to ourselves" (1983, p. 21). "Our mental life," Harré argues, "is the result of the acquisition of a theory" (p. 21). During the process of socialization, or "educational process," as Harré calls it, we acquire the theoretical concept "self." The concept "self" arises in the same way that concepts arise in natural sciences: "to describe processes and entities which are held responsible for patterns found in observation and experiment, but which are beyond existing observational techniques" (Harré, 1987, p. 47). Harré gives the examples of the familiar concepts and theories: the concept of molecule, which arose as an analogy of a "Newtonian material thing," and the theory of natural selection, which emerged as a parallel of domestic selection. Natural selection is not an observable phenomenon, but is inferred from observing the practices of animal breeding, even as the unobservable force of gravity is postulated from the observable behavior of physical bodies. Thus, in the "language game" of biology, new species come about through differential encouragement of natural variations by natural selection, in a way parallel to the new breeds created in livestock by differentially encouraging domestic variations by domestic selection. Similarly, unobservable selves are inferred as analogues of commonly observed persons. In the language games common to many societies, the concept of "selves" arises by following the same rules of grammar that people use in talking about persons. In other words, we learn to talk about "I" and "me" the same way that we learn to talk about "he," "she," "him," or "her."

Viewed from Harré's sociolinguistic approach, the "I" is a first-person pronoun that serves an indexical function to help locate the speaker in an array of persons even as the terms "here" and "now" designate the location and point in time for persons who share and understand the spatiotemporal and social context of conversation. The consistent usage of the terms "I" and "self" therefore seems compatible with a spatiotemporally continuous entity to which psychological states, rights and duties, and praise and blame can be (Harré, 1987, p. 48). Aside from serving an indexical function, consistent use of the first-person pronoun helps provide a systematic organization to an individual's experience. Since

such organization is a product of language games, it is likely to differ from one linguistic community to another. However, in Harré's view, the language games typical of most European languages help organize all experience around the "I" as the center.

The "centered" structure described by Harré (1983) does not imply "egocentricity" in the Piagetian sense; its main feature is a "point" or pencil organization (p. 144) that has a "center" from which radial arrows emanate in the direction of uncountable intentional objects, so to speak. Harré schematically represents this notion of structure in Fig. 4.1. The fact that the arrows in Harré's scheme reach out to "intentional" objects is very important, because it emphasizes the *directed* nature of consciousness (discussed briefly earlier in Chapter 2). However, intentionality conceived in this fashion is purely an artifact of language; it does not imply a "seer" located at the center. There is no ontological or existential significance to the "I" as conceived by Harré Indeed, the circle representing the structure of experience in Harré's theory is "empty." According to Harré (1987):

> The structure [as represented in Fig. 4.11 can exist whether or not there is any being at the "centre" to which the concept of "self" refers ... [T]he embedded "I" can be a common subject of predication in just the way a theoretical term in physics can. In this way the "self" is very much like the concept of "gravity," which serves to organize our experience with respect to structured and centered fields, while we can remain quite agnostic as to whether there is anything substantial occupying the "centres of gravity" ... (p. 49–50)

Thus, linguistic practices involving first-person pronouns are effective in creating an impression that all experiences of a person center around a common "point" of view and a point of action.

As to identity, Harré (1983) distinguishes between the two senses or meanings of "sameness" implied in the notion of identity: (1) the sameness of a property or quality in numerically distinct and different entities, and (2) the numerical identity implied in saying "this is the same person" (p. 204), and he tries to account for both. Harré (1983) also distinguishes clearly and sharply between the *sense* of identity ("how people experience their unique selfhood"), on the one

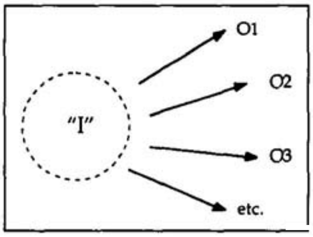

FIGURE 4.1. Harré's view of the "pencil" organization of the mind. Reproduced from Harré (1987), with permission.

hand, and the *fact* of personal identity ("what it is that makes a human being this or that particular person within a public–collective context," p. 203), on the other. He considers the fact of identity as well established, since not only humans but even chimpanzees seem to have no difficulty in treating each other differently. For Harré it seems equally obvious that most people have a strong sense of their personal identity. "What ... are the origins of this strong sense of identity?" asks Harré "I propose to show," he answers, "that the best *hypothesis* is that though the sense of identity is conceptually and logically distinct from the *fact* of personal identity, nevertheless the former, in the course of human development, derives from the latter" (1983, p. 210; emphasis added). A couple of pages later in the same text, he adds that "a human being does not learn that he or she is a person by the empirical disclosure of *an experiential fact.* Personal identity is symbolic of social practices, not of empirical experiences. It has the status of a *theory"* (Harré, 1983, p. 212; emphasis added).

It is rather strange that, as clearly indicated by the above quotations, Harré sometimes considers personal identity to be a matter of fact and sometimes a theory. As to the empirical foundations of the fact of identity, he seems to have some doubts insofar as he says that "[a]dequate empirical studies of this matter have yet to be made" (1983, p. 210). As to the foundations of the theory of personal identity, he stresses the view that sameness of the person is a strong and necessary *presupposition,* and provides various arguments to support the view. First, Harré (1983, p. 210) approvingly refers to Joseph Butler's (1735/1975, in response to Locke) argument that memories *presuppose* identity of a person. Second, he argues that (1983, p. 209) it is nonsensical to think that, in trying to answer the question "Who am I?" I could one day discover that I was someone else. For, he says, questioning one's personal identity "undermines one of the very *presuppositions* that are required for first person utterances to make sense" (pp. 209–210, emphasis added). Harré's constant vacillation between identity as fact versus theory, or discovery versus presupposition, reveals a major weakness in his solution to the problem of identity.

Certain other difficulties in Harré's views follow from his *social* constructionist view of the self. He suggests, for instance, that a socially constructed self cannot be individually altered. According to Harré (1983), it is "... virtually impossible for [Western] people to acquire the genuinely Oriental selves they need to be adepts of Eastern religions" (p. 26). While I can appreciate the difficulty in adopting Yogic or Advaita Vedantic practices while living in a North American society, the "virtual *impossibility"* of doing so seems exaggerated to me. Harré is apparently not unaware of the popularity in the West of "Eastern" practices designed to radically modify selfhood. Thus, while reviewing the literature on altered states of consciousness, he mentions that "[a]depts of 'altered states' techniques talk of 'dissolving the self' or sometimes 'decentering experience' " (1983, p. 165). He concludes from his review of the literature that "[t]he 'dissolu-

tion of self' is a temporary cognitive incapacity, not at all to be confused with the selflessness of one who puts the interests or welfare of others before in his or her own. Just this confusion is much in evidence in fringe psychology" (1983, p. 165). I am not sure whether this alleged confusion is the problem of the "fringe" psychologists, who are targets of Harré;s scorn6 or Harré;s own. Granted that it is not very easy for Asians to assimilate in Western cultures, or for Westerners to successfully practice Eastern technologies of the self, but these are not impossible tasks as Harré;s would have us believe. Those who witness the East–West cultural exchange from close quarters could easily encounter concrete instances of success in bridging the hemispheric cultural gap, but those who assign such exchange to the "fringe" may be either unwilling or unable to encounter and recognize such instances.

Overview of Contemporary Perspectives on Self-as-Knower

The small number of studies examined above cannot be claimed to be representative of the entire range of contemporary perspectives on the relationship between cognition and the self. Nevertheless, they do give a flavor of some of the prominent trends of current thought. To help provide an overview of these trends, the following questions may be asked: How is the self-as-knower conceptualized in cognitive psychological terms? How can it be studied? Does the self-as-knower account for identity, i.e., unity and sameness of selfhood? Whatever its nature, what can we *do* with it?

Greenwald and Pratkanis are among the very few psychologists today who have explicitly addressed the question of the self-as-knower at a metatheoretical level. They view the self-as-knower in terms of (1) existing cognitive structures that direct the individual's information processing, and (2) the ongoing cognitive processes. This makes sense insofar as my current cognitive schema are the means I have at my disposal in getting to know the world. They are the glasses through which I see the world. My current assumptions and beliefs serve as prototypes with which I compare new ideas in assessing their truth value. As Piaget's work shows, my cognitive processes (concrete or formal operations and the like) keep evolving, so that my ways of using the existing cognitive structures also change from time to time.

Cognitive structures are not open to direct observation. However, as Piaget and other cognitive psychologists have shown, their existence can be confidently inferred, and their features can be reliably described, on the basis of fairly simple observations of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Most such methods are devised for the experimenters to study cognitive structures and processes in others, rather than themselves. Greenwald and Pratkanis have rightly noted that the ongoing cognitive processes are not easily observable either. This is an old observation. The rapidity of the thinking processes poses a major difficulty in studying the self-as-

knower in action. William James noted this difficulty at the dawn of modern psychology, In the early part of this century, the introspectionists of Würzburg tried to train subjects in watching their own thought processes while solving simple problems in arithmetic or logical reasoning. However, the controversies surrounding their findings and methods led J. B. Watson to conclude that introspectionist methods were incurably unreliable. Despite the revival of interest in introspective studies of consciousness in recent years (Pope & Singer, 1978), cognitive processes are generally recognized by most contemporary psychologists as directly unobservable.

This is an issue where the traditional Indian perspective is quite different. Ancient yogis devised a different way of coping with the problem of the rapidity of thought processes: try to slow down and attenuate thought processes. Husserl tried to do something similar in early decades of the 20th century. I have compared the yogic and Husserlian approaches elsewhere (Paranjpe & Hanson, 1988), and it is not necessary to repeat that discussion here. However, Husserl himself abandoned his meditative phenomenology in favor of interpretive phenomenology. The persistent lack of interest in the West in the manipulation of ones's own mental processes, along with a reluctance to accept the evidence of experiential states obtained through successful meditative practices, presents a major problem in East–West dialogue on issues such as the self-as-knower and the transcendental Self beyond it. I shall return to this broader issue in the last chapter of this volume.

As to the sameness of the self-as-knower, contemporary approaches are clear and unequivocal. If we follow Greenwald and Pratkanis in considering existing cognitive structures that direct information processing to be the self-as-knower, it must be open to continual change. First, as Piagetian studies show, the cognitive structures and processes evolve according to a pattern of growth guided by a biological timetable for maturation. Second, as the world around us changes, we must appropriately change ("accommodate") our ways of knowing or else stagnate and be ineffective in dealing with the environment. A changing self-as-knower cannot itself account for selfsameness in a person. Advaita Vedantists explicitly recognize this, and as we shall see, suggest a transcognitive center of experience as the basis for selfsameness of personhood.

Turning now to the issue of what we can *do* with the self-as-knower, we may note that among the cognitive constructionist perspectives examined earlier in this chapter, Kelly's approach is the most strongly applied in orientation. Kelly is one of the pioneers in developing therapeutic techniques for the reconstruction of not only one's self-image, or self-as-known, but also of the cognitive constructs involved in appraising all kinds of objects, implying the self-as-knower. In a broad sense, the self-as-knower is open to modification through a variety of means-such as education, therapy, or even propaganda-designed to bring about changes in our cognitive contents and structures. Applications of Kellyian techniques, like those of most other Western models, aim at the restoration of normality among

persons who see themselves to be deficient in coping with problems in life or those who are medically diagnosed as "patients" in need of therapy. Such applications are clearly much needed in every society in the East as well as the West. The approach called the "path of knowledge" *(jñana mārga)* that developed in India is also a "therapeutic" device, except that it, is aimed not at the removal of pathologies or deficiencies, but at a radical removal of suffering and the attainment of extraordinary levels of inner contentment and bliss. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall discuss the Advaita Vedāntic search for a transcendental, transcognitive basis for identity in the language and metaphor of constructivist cognitive psychology and psychotherapy.

The Self Beyond Cognition: Cognitive Deconstruction of the Ego in Advaita Vedāntic Meditation

As noted in Chapter 3, it is the embodied person *(jīva)* that is the knower, agent, and enjoyer/sufferer in Advaita Vedānta. Radhakrishnan (1948/1973) explains that, according to Śaṅkara, a person's understanding of oneself as a knower–agent–enjoyer is "constructed out of ignorance" *(avidyākalpita)* (p. 355).7 In Advaita Vedānta, the self-as-knower is both constructor and constructed. In the process or construction, there is misattribution of permanence and selfsameness of the Self onto the ego, and at the same time, sickness, tiredness, and other such transitory qualities of the body are mistakenly attributed to the unchanging Self. Advaita Vedānta suggests a method of critical self-examination for the removal of this error of double misattribution *(adhyāsa).* The successful practice of this method is said to lead to the direct experience of the Self in its natural state of Being. In my view, the Advaita Vedāntic method of meditation is interpretable in the contemporary idiom as a form of cognitive "deconstruction" of the ego. To help deepen the understanding of the Advaita Vedāntic views of self and identity, it is necessary to first clarify some of its basic concepts and related issues in the language and idiom of contemporary psychology.

The Advaita Vedāntic View of Cognition, Knowledge, and the Knower

The Sanskrit term *jñāna* is usually translated as *knowledge* in English, but this is not quite accurate; also, there is no exact Sanskrit equivalent of the term cognition, as it is used in psychology today. Unlike the term *knowledge,* which generally implies veridical cognition, jñāna does not always imply veridicality. As noted by D. M. Datta (1932/1972, p. 19), the word *jñāna* stands for all kinds of cognition, irrespective of whether it is true *(yathārtha)* or false *(mithyā)* The Sanskrit term *pramā* means valid cognition, and *pramātr* means the "knower"

who tries to obtain valid cognition. *Pramāṇa* is the source that "causes" (i.e., brings about) knowledge, or validates the cognition. While in the Western tradition perception and inference, or experience and reason, are widely recognized as the two sources of knowledge, in India six sources are commonly recognized. They are, as noted in the previous chapter, direct perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, nonperception, and postulation. We need not discuss the nature and epistemological significance of all the six sources here. We need to focus mainly on direct perception *(pratyakṣa)* and postulation, since these are more relevant for our purpose than others.

Most schools of Indian thought consider knowledge *(jñāna)* to be a kind of relationship between the knower *(jñātr, pramātr)* and the known *(jñeya, prameya).* The Advaita Vedānta also considers such tripartite division *(tripuṭī)* as central to their conceptual analysis. However, unlike some other systems, the Advaitists hold that each component is but a differentiated aspect of the same ubiquitous Brahman. While in the fourth state of consciousness, the Brahman is experienced in its undifferentiated form, in the wakeful state its all-pervasive "conscious stuff" *(caitanya)* manifests differentially as the knower *(pramātr)* knowledge *(pramā),* and the object of knowledge (prameya). It is only an individuated and embodied consciousness that can be a knower, not the undifferentiated pure consciousness. Although Brahman is sometimes considered to be the Truth *(satyam)* or Knowledge Incarnate *(jñānam),* such expression implies knowledge in the "higher" form (*parā vidyā*), not in the ordinary or empirical form *(apara vidyā),* While the higher knowledge is transcognitive and nonsensory, the ordinary or empirical knowledge must depend on the various sensory and cognitive processes of a living body functioning in an attentive mode.

Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) lists a set of conditions without which a knower cannot function: (1) the senses based in a body, (2) an ego that is identified with the body and is in possession and control of the sensory functions, and (3) the ego's attention to, and involvement in, what is going on around itself. For knowledge to be possible at all, all these enabling conditions, or "adjuncts" *(upādhi),* are essential. All these adjuncts belong to the material *(jaḍa)* world; by their very nature they are impermanent and lack the luminosity or illuminating character of consciousness. As such, the ego, as knower, must borrow the illuminating power from the Ātman, which is unchanging *(nitya),* conscious *(caitanyamaya),* and self-illuminating *(svayaṁ prakāśa).* Despite its self-illuminating character, the Ātman cannot itself be a knower of objects in the world. This is because being uninvolved (*asaṅga*) and passive *(akartṛ),* the Ātman cannot "reach out to the world," so to speak, and use the various psychophysical means such as the senses and the intellect needed to obtain knowledge. A sense of egoism and a degree of identification with the body, senses, mind, intellect, and other adjuncts are indispensable for the possibility of empirical knowledge. Thus, in *Siddhāntabindu,* Madhusūana Sarasvatī insists that the empirical knower *(pramātṛ)* is the ego that acts, enjoys, and suffers,

not the unattached and unchanging Atman [8] (see Abhyankar, 1928/1962, p. 19). Advaita Vedanta clearly accepts an epistemic dualism. Knowledge at the lower, practical, day-to-day level is viewed as the territory of the embodied ego involved with events in the surrounding world, while the higher form of knowledge is said to be experienced by the unattached, transcendental Ātman.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, the sense of "I" simultaneously manifests the diametrically opposed properties of the transcendental Atman on the one hand and of the empirical ego enmeshed in the world on the other. While the "I" derives the sense of permanence and illuminating character of consciousness from the Self *(Ātman),* it also manifests the continually changing features of the body as well as its cognitive capacities, structures, contents, and processes. Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) points out that in our sense of "I" there is a mutual superimposition *(adhyāsa)* of the characteristics of the Ātman–Brahman and the ego onto each other. Thus, the Self, although unchanging and blissful in nature, *appears* to be sometimes happy and sometimes sad, dejected, frustrated, or whatever the ego interprets itself to feel in the continually changing circumstances. On the other hand, the many changing selves appear to be one and the same "I" because of misattribution to them of permanence and undivided character of the Self, i.e., Ātman–Brahman. In either case, something appears to be what it is *not* (see Mahadevan, 1985).

Advaita Vedāntists use the term *adhyāsa,* meaning superimposition, to designate the *misattribution* of the properties of the single, unchanging Self onto the many changing selves. This constitutes the "fundamental attributional error," to use an expression popular in contemporary social psychology. Superimposition involves an error because of the appearance of one as having the attributes of another. According to Śaṅkara, this error is generalized and pervasive: the multiplicity of forms and objects in the entire universe appear to be different despite being the same as one single undivided Brahman, even as multiple selves appear as one and the same "I". To help understand the superimposition of the properties of the one and the many, Advaita Vedantists use the metaphor of one and the same sun appearing to be many different suns, as it were, when reflected in countless ripples of water. The sun appears to be many, which it is not, and the ripples appear to be luminous, although they are not. According to Advaita Vedānta, this fundamental attributional error limits human knowledge to such an extent that the whole of humanity is believed to suffer from a "grand illusion" *(māyā),* or nescience *(avidyā,* or "ignorance"). I think that the meaning and implications of the ideas of *māyā* and *avidyā* can best be understood in the light of the "constructionist" implications of Advaita Vedānta.

The Advaita Vedānta and the Constructivist View of Knowledge

Contemporary constructivism and constructionism of Piaget (1954), Berger and Luckmann (1966), Kelly (1955), Goodman (1978), and others offers a relatively new perspective on the nature of knowledge, and I have not yet come across

any writings pointing out its parallels in Indian thought. In my view, the Advaita Vedānta has some important constructivist implications that deserve to be discussed here in some detail. The most important in this regard is the fundamental Advaita Vedāntic idea of the constructed *(kalpita)* nature of the phenomenal world. The term kalpita is derived from the verb *klṛip,* which is the common root of a set of concepts- *saṁkalpa, vikalpa, savikalpa, and nirvikalpa-* that have a crucial place in Indian thought in general, and in the Advaita Vedānta in particular. In the traditional Sanskrit way of writing, a great deal of attention is paid to the etymology of the words, and technical terms are coined with more critical and meticulous attention to the shades of meaning than is common in English. Against this background, it will be useful to examine what the above-mentioned set of terms means, although such analysis might sound overly punctilious or even inane to those accustomed to the Western styles of scholarship.

The Monier-Williams Dictionary lists the following among the meanings of the verb *klṛip:* to frame, form, invent, compose, arrange, or imagine. By adding the prefix *saṁ* to this root, we get the verb that means "to put together, think about, ponder, wish or determine," while the prefix *vi* obtains "to fashion, contrive or combine, conjecture, or imagine in *various* ways," or "doubt, waver, or hesitate." In general, the prefix *saṁ* which is the Sanskrit equivalent to the Latin *com* or *co* and Greek *sym,* conveys similarity or togetherness, while vi conveys dissimilarity and seperateness.[9] As such, the terms *saṁkapa* and *vikālpa* mean "thinking together or in various ways," or "engaging in synthesis and analysis"; they almost exactly convey what contemporary psychology refers to as cognitive "integration" and "differentiation." This would explain why the mind *(manas)* is defined as that which is engaged in samkalpa and vikalpa, i.e., in putting similar things together and telling dissimilar ones apart, and in construing, doubting, deciding, and so on. We see distinct shades here of what may be called in Kantian terms the *synthetic* and *analytic* functions of reason, integration and differentiation in Piagetian terms, or construal of categories as understood in George Kelly's psychology. In Indian philosophy, the terms *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa* have been used to describe two distinct forms of perception. It is common in most schools of Indian thought to describe perception and cognition *(samjñāna)* among babies as *nirvikalpa pratyakṣa,* meaning that infants do not have the ability to perceive diversity or distinction, or to construe or imagine. In other words, individuals develop the ability to make meaningful distinctions, construe, and imagine (savi-*kalpa pratyakṣa*), i.e., the capacity to "reason," as they grow up.[10] In Advaita Vedānta, however, the terms savikalpa and nirvikalpa have acquired a special meaning. They are used as adjectives to describe two distinct types of altered states of consciousness *(samādhi)* which are characterized and noncharacterized by the distinction between knower and known, respectively. The overall thrust of Advaita Vedānta is to attain a state of *nirvikalpa samādhi,* which is devoid of the knower–known distinction.

Against the background of the analysis of the terms derived from the verb *klṛip,*

the Advaita Vedantic approach may be understood in a constructivist terminology as follows: By its very nature the human mind tends to organize experience in terms of similarity and differences in what is perceived, and to construe, think, wish, imagine, doubt, choose, and determine in terms of such organization of experience. Although the perceptual and cognitive functions lack differentiation during infancy, they develop as the individual grows up. With the help of the various cognitive functions, the individual constructs an image ofthe world around and assigns a place for him- or herself within it. The result is an ego that is wrapped up within a world image ofits own making. It is in this sense that, I think, Śaṅkara (1921, Stanza 137) compares the person to a moth wrapped up in its own cocoon. A way out ofthis trap is to carefully examine the various constructs with which the self is ordinarily identified while keeping in mind that the true Self is unchanging, and that identifying oneself with the variety of continually changing constructs is ultimately erroneous.

The Imperfect Ego as a Knower in a Sea of "Ignorance"

As noted in the previous chapter, Śaṅkara's term *avidyā* is a technical term that suggests the *incompleteness* and imperfection of all empirical knowledge in contrast to the "higher knowledge" claimed to be attainable in the transcognitive fourth state of consciousness. *Avidyā* does not imply the many pejorative connotations ofthe term *ignorant,* such as illiterate, unlettered, untutored, unlearned, or lacking in intelligence. In Advaita Vedānta the incompleteness of empirical knowledge is attributed to the imperfections of the enabling conditions or cognitive apparatus of all human beings, including the most gifted.

We may pause here to compare Śaṅkara's view of the incompleteness of empirical knowledge with Piaget's views discussed earlier in this chapter. We may recall that according to Piaget, human knowledge is forever incomplete and revisable because our cognitive structures, which are necessary for knowing anything at any time, are always "in the making" and never perfected. Piaget considers his views about the perpetual revisability of knowledge as consistent with Godel's theorem of incompleteness. I consider the Piagetian idea of the perpetual revisability ofknowledge as consistent with Quine's idea that in science no proposition is immune from revision. Indeed, Piaget repeatedly refers to Godel's theorem in explaining andjustifying his view ofknowledge as perpetually evolving. It is my impression that Sankara's view of the incompleteness of all human knowledge is essentially compatible with the views of Gödel, Piaget, and Quine, although each of them formulates his views differently and on differing bases. If in the Piagetian sense scientific progress implies merely going from weaker to stronger systems of knowledge, but never to the state of perfection, then according to Advaita Vedānta, all that the sciences do is to reduce the level of our perpetual "ignorance."

I think it is in this sense that Śaṅkara (1980,1.1.1) insists that all forms of knowing, along with the various means of validation *(pramana)* used in the various sciences *(śāstrāṇi)* lie within the domain of *avidyā* or nescience. Yet by no means does he consider the sciences as worthless. The *Īśa* Upaniṣad (#11)[11] clearly recommendsthat one should pursue both, *vidya* as well as *avidya* saying that pursuing just one without the other could lead us to darkness. Although all the sciences are bound to be forever imperfect, we need them to carry ourselves through the mundane world or the practical reality. This is the field in which the self-as-knower, or the ego, must work. It must face the challenges of the changing world with the help of the less-than-perfect means at its disposal to obtain empirical knowledge.

What is the nature of this self-as-knower and how does it acquire empirical knowledge of the surrounding world? The Advaita Vedāntic texts provide a complex model of the same. Let me draw a composite sketch of the Advaita Vedāntic views of this model with the help of S. N. Dasgupta's overview of Śaṅkara's school of Advaita Vedānta. The Advaita Vedānta assigns the tasks of perception, cognition, recollection, and others to an entity conceived as the "inner instrument" *(antaḥkaraṇa)*. As noted in the previous chapter, the inner instrument includes the mind *(manas)* manifesting attentivity, the intellect *(buddhi)* meaning the capacity for determination and ascertainment, and citta, a storehouse of past impressions and memories. The inner instrument is a crucial aspect of the embodied person that coordinates the functions of the senses and the body while in constant interaction with events within the body and its surroundings. The inner instrument is said to "reach out" to objects in the environment through the senses, and to become transformed into their shapes, so to speak. The inner instrument is constantly undergoing modifications, depending on the objects it reaches out to, and it tries to "know" them by itself being transformed into their shapes. Although this view of the self-as-knower might sound somewhat arcane, its conception of human cognition need not sound entirely outlandish or outdated. Thus, the idea of the inner instrument being modified in the shape of the objects resonates with the Gestalt notion of *isomorphism,* meaning that perceptual experience is shaped by the structure of the brain functions. Also, the notion of the "reaching out" of the inner instrument is suggestive of K. R. Popper's metaphor that knowing is like throwing a searchlight on an object; one reaches out to objects, as it were, looking for things that one *expects* to find, or for data that make sense in light of *preconceived* theories and hypotheses (see Popper, 1979, pp. 341–361) At any rate, an aspect of the Advaita Vedāntic view of the inner instrument that is not compatible with Western conceptions is the idea that the inner instrument reflects pure consciousness *(cit)* of the Ātman, and gets to know the world owing to its capacity to "illuminate."

According to the Advaita Vedanta truth or reality is self-luminous *(svayaṁ-*

prakāśa). Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1) explains the idea of self-luminosity as the "capacity of being ever present in all our acts of consciousness without in any way being an object of consciousness" (p. 474). It involves "pure consciousness" of the self-as-subject where the infinite regress *(anavasthā)* of the "consciousness of consciousness" comes to an end. We may recall here Hilgard's metaphor, mentioned earlier in this chapter, of the reflection of images in a barber shop as an analogy of the self taking a look at itself taking a look at itself ... ad infinitum. American psychologists of the early 20th century had encountered this problem inherent in the self-reflective nature of consciousness. Some of them abandoned the notion of consciousness altogether because of the apparently intractable nature of the infinite regress in conceiving of consciousness of consciousness. By sharp contrast, the Advaita Vedāntists suggest a way out of this problem by conceiving of pure consciousness to be devoid of the subject–object split typical of ordinary states of consciousness. In their view, pure consciousness *(cit)* is a distinctive feature of Ātman–Brahman, which is said to be ubiquitous and provides the bedrock on which awareness of each living being rests. As to how this single ubiquitous, undivided, pure consciousness gave rise to the distinct individual awareness of countless living beings is a mystery, and Advaita Vedāntists refer to it as *māyā,* the primordial illusion. According to some (but not all) of the Advaitist philosophers, pure consciousness of the universe as a whole is said to be reflected in each individual being. Consciousness then appears in different individualized forms like the countless ripples reflecting the shared brilliance of the single sun. The illuminating power of each ripple is not the same, as it is limited by its size, position, the relative impurity of the water, and similar other limiting features. Likewise, the consciousness of each individual living being *(jīva)* is limited by the nature of the sensory and cognitive apparatus it has at its disposal to become aware of, and to know, the world.

COGNITION AND THE MEANS OF ITS VALIDATION

According to the Advaita Vedānta, the long journey toward enlightenment must begin from within the domain of *avidyā* or nescience, since nescience is natural to human beings at birth. This idea is in tune with William James's oft-quoted phrase that at birth a babe faces merely a "booming and buzzing mass of confusion." It is inevitable that development of knowledge starts with the sensory–motor equipment provided by nature at the time of birth. Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) likens humans with animals in being born with a particular set of sensory capacities and in being subject to the lure of rewards and aversion to punishments. Most Advaita Vedāntists seem to implicitly agree with the view expressed by some thinkers of the Mīmāṁsā school that babies, like animals, are capable of only an *indeterminate* form of perception.[12] In this primitive form of perception, called

nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa there is only an unanalyzed, uninterpreted, and unmeaning sensory experience (see Datta, 193211972, p. 97). In *Vedānta Paribhāṣā,* a highly acclaimed work on Advaita Vedāntic epistemology, Dharmarāja (1972) starts his discussion of the nature of perception *(pratyakṣa)* by distinguishing between the indeterminate and determinate forms of perception.[13]

According to the Advaita Vedānta the determinate form of perception differs from the indeterminate form in that in the determinate variety, names, universal characteristics shared by the objects with those in its class, adjectives describing specific or distinguishing features of the objects, and the like are added to what is given in sensory experience. While in the indeterminate form (or "stage") of perception one is only aware of the existence *(sanmātram)* of an object without its context and relations, in the determinate stage the relational and contextual meanings are added. As noted earlier, the term *savikalpa* means "with analytical judgment and cognitive construal." As such, *savikalpaka pratyakṣa* implies perception combined with cognitive construction, analysis, and differentiation.

To put it in the context of Western views discussed in Chapter 1, the more primitive indeterminate perception can be said to account for what is "given in experience," while the more complex determinate perception includes what is "added by the mind." At any rate, these two forms of perception *(pratyakṣa)* together constitute but one of the six means to knowledge *(pramā)* espoused by the Advaita Vedāntists The other five means are: (1) inference, (2) verbal testimony, (3) comparison, (4) nonperception, and (5) postulation. Without going into this list in detail, it may be noted that all five sources involve what is "added by the mind" rather than what is directly given in experience. Nonperception *(anupalabdhi)* presents a particularly interesting case, because it implies the kind of knowledge that is obtained when one is convinced about a proposition such as: "there is no pot now on the ground." Thus, at times, we "know" something with certainty by the very *absence* of that something from what is given in experience. As noted by Datta (1932/1972), by "postulation" *(arthāpatii)* the Advaita Vedāntists mean "the assumption, supposition, or postulation of a fact *(artha* = fact; *āpatti* = *kalpanā* = supposition)" (p. 237). Modem psychology shows how human beings learn to "postulate" the continued existence of objects from their absence in direct experience of the moment. Piaget's studies have shown, for instance, that babies begin to first recognize and then actively search for vanished objects such as toys at the age of about 8 months (Piaget, 1954). The baby's searching behavior shows that she implicitly *assumes* the continued existence of the missing toy in the absence of any evidence of its existence in her current experience. This is as if babies learn to know the world by implicit "postulation" of facts, as the Advaita Vedāntists would call it. Indeed, Piaget (1954, p. 105) attributes the child's mastery of object permanence to the "constructive deduction "- an expression that resonates the Advaita Vedāntic notion of postulation. By giving clear analysis of, and in

attaching importance to, nonperception and postulation as means to knowledge, Advaita Vedānta clearly adopts a constructivist approach. According to this approach, knowing often involves going "beyond the information given,"as Jerome Bruner (1973) puts it.

Indeed, Advaita Vedāntic texts provide a detailed analysis of cognitive construction, particularly of assumption and postulation. In *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* for instance, Dharamrāja (1972, Ch. V) gives the following examples of knowing by means of assumption or postulation: (1) When someone utters only the word "door" and nothing more, from the context I *know* for sure that she means "shut the door." (2) When we see that someone is *growing* fat day by day but claims to be fasting and is also not seen eating during the day, we safely conclude that he must be eating during the night. In the former example, the mind *assumes* that the word "shut" was intended although not heard, and thereby fills the gaps in perceptual experience. Modem psychology provides empirical evidence of the phenomenon of filling the gaps that often appear in perceptual experience. An example from Gestalt psychology relates to the commonplace observation that a broken contour of a circle is almost always recognized as a circle despite many gaps in it. In Dharamrāja's example of the person growing fat, one postulates the cause of the increasing weight despite the lack of evidence of eating by direct observation. In such instances, we tend to depend on circumstantial evidence. In postulation, says Dharmarāja (1972, p. 122), one says "thereby I imagine or construe thus and such" *(anena idam kalpayāmi).* To put it in a broader context, knowing involves a postulation of entities or principles by projecting beyond what is given in experience. This is precisely what scientists do in postulating entities like electrons and black holes, or the square root of minus one, despite the lack of supporting evidence by direct observation. Hume was correct in pointing out that principles such as causality are added by the mind; causes are not given in direct experience.

The constructivist implications of the Advaita Vedāntic view should now be clear. Human cognition is fundamentally a constructive activity; what we claim to *know* often depends in great part on what is supplied by a construing and reasoning mind. Reality, as we know it, is largely a matter of construction. The Advaita Vedāntic notion of the self-as-knower is clearly that of a *constructor* of reality, who relies on a variety of criteria of validation of which sensory experience is but a small part. Here once again we may recall Śaṅkara's famous metaphor of the *jīva* as a moth lying in a cocoon of its own fabrication; we are all trapped in a world of our own making.

Knowledge as an End and as a Means

Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms begin with the following declaration: "Now, therefore, the desire to know Brahman." [14] The knowledge of Brahman is

the raison d'être of Vedānta; in other words, knowledge is the goal in itself, not just a means. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (4.38) declares that nothing on earth is as pure or as sacred as knowledge.[15] Moreover, Brahman is itself the Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity *(satyaṁ jñanmanantaṁ brahma).*[16] According to the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (2.14), knowledge of the Brahman is beyond the consideration of what is right and what is not right, beyond what is done and what is not done, and beyond past, present, and future. In explicitly placing the pursuit of knowledge beyond the consideration of right and wrong, the Upanisads almost outdo the dispassionate spirit of Greek *theoria* or the valuation of "knowledge for its own sake" so highly adulated by Husserl. Nevertheless, in the Indian tradition, a sophistic, purely "academic" and apparently aimless pursuit of learning has often been shunned. The *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (2.5), for instance, derides the self-proclaimed scholars by likening them to blind men led by a blind man. Moreover, what is valued most is not the empirical knowledge of the world of objects that could help attain mastery over nature, but the knowledge of the Self *(svarūpajñānam).*

Regardless of the fact that most Advaita Vedāntists consider knowledge as an end in itself, there are occasional references in Vedāntic literature where it is viewed also as a means to an end. Dharmarāja for instance, clearly states that the attainment of highest bliss and the removal of suffering are the twin goals of Advaita Vedānta,[17] although Śaṅkara seems to downplay the role of blissfulness of Brahman as an incentive for attaining the knowledge of Brahman. As is common in Indian thought in general, and in Sāṅkhya and Buddhism in particular, suffering is viewed as the problem of greatest concern. (We shall deal with the Sankhya views on the nature of suffering and its eradication in the next chapter.) As noted in the previous chapter, one of the most dominant themes of the Indian culture is the view that an excess of suffering over pleasure is the invariable outcome of the perpetual cycle of karma and its consequences, and release *(mokṣa)* from it is considered to be the highest goal of life. Sureśvara (1980), a direct disciple of Śaṅkara, for instance, begins his well-known work, *Naiṣkarmya-Siddhi,* with the observation that the attempt to rid oneself of suffering is a tendency common to all creatures, ranging from the creator Brahma down to a tuft of grass.[18] As noted in the previous chapter, intense desire for the release from the miserable karmic cycle *(mumukṣā)* is, after all, one of the basic prerequisites for anyone who wishes to embark on the Advaita Vedāntic path.

A related idea espoused by many but not all Vedāntists is the notion that knowledge is the *only* means to the release from suffering. It has been stressed by some Vedāntists to the point that the phrase *"jñānādeva tu kaivalyam,"* which means that release can be attained only through knowledge, has become a cliché. A possible reason for the extraordinary emphasis on knowledge in the Vedāntic doctrines is the debate with the rival school of Mīmāṁsā, which holds that action *(karma),* especially in the form of rituals enjoined by the Vedas, is *the* means to release. Śaṅkara's (1921) preference for knowledge over action is expressed in

Vivekacūḍāmani (verse #11), where he asserts that not even a million actions can lead to release. In post-Śaṅkara Advaita Vedānta, the relative merits of knowledge versus action in the attainment of release were hotly debated between the followers of Maṇḍna Miśra who proposed that a combination of knowledge and action *(jñana-karma samuccaya)* is the best way to attain release, and the followers of Suresvara and others, who insisted that knowledge is the only means.

Here, we need not discuss the debate between Bhāmati and Vivaraṇa schools[19] of Advaita Vedānta over the relative merits of only knowledge versus knowledge-combined-with-action as means to release (see Suryanarayana Sastri, 1941/1961).[20] In this chapter, we need to consider only those issues that bear on the nature of the Self in relation to cognition and knowledge. The ambiguous usage of the term jñana for knowledge is problematic in this context. Knowledge as an end implies transcendental knowledge *(parā vidyā)* experienced in the fourth state of consciousness *(turīyā avasthā)* and not empirical knowledge *(aparā vidyā)* attainable through the various processes of cognition. Śaṅkara's view, which states that in order to attain the knowledge of the Self, one need not *do* anything, for knowledge, as conceived of in this context, is a state, not a process, is important in this context. Moreover, knowledge is the *natural* state of the Self; as noted above, the very nature of Ātman–Brahman is said to be Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity. Therefore, in order to be released, one's Being is simply to be *discovered.* Self-knowledge is said to be fundamentally different from empirical knowledge. Self-knowledge implies the awareness of that which one is, has been, and always will be, and as such, it must manifest itself as soon as misconceptions about selfhood are removed. By contrast, knowledge of objects (including that of the Jamesian self-as-object) must be *attained* through the processes of cognitive construction and validation and continually be revised in light of continual changes in the knower and the known. In *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* (1.53), Sureśvara (1980, p. 33) argues that release is not something to be created, attained, processed, or changed by means of action. If so, why should anyone bother with the program of action outlined by Advaita Vedanta in the form of listening, reflecting, and contemplating recommended as the path of knowledge *(jñāna mārga)* leading to release?

An answer to this question can be found in some of Śaṅkara's writings. Śaṅkara (1921, 11) explains that the purpose of a recommended course of action is merely to clear up one's mind; learning and contemplating the principles of Advaita Vedānta are merely a secondary means for the attainment of release. If so, why did Śaṅkara go to such great lengths in refuting rival schools of thought and establishing the merits of Advaita Vedānta in volume after volume of discussion? The answer is, it seems to me, that the purpose of the Advaita Vedāntic polemics against the more fallible doctrines is to help clear up the possible sources of confusion. All the arguments and detailed explanation of doctrines have no greater function than pointing the way. Verbal expression, including the most lucid and comprehensive exposition of Advaita Vedānta, cannot in and of itself lead one to

the experience of the Ātman–Brahman, which is, after all, beyond words. The primary justification of the enterprise of scholarship, polemics, study, contemplation, and so on is that it serves to dispel *avidyā* or "ignorance," which is, after all, the common condition of human beings from birth.

The Nature of "Ignorance" and the Role of Meditation in Its Removal

There is a difference of opinion among the subschools of Advaita Vedānta on the nature of ignorance *(avidyā)* and the role of study and meditation in its removal. According to Vācaspati Miśra, *avidyā* resides in the *jīva,* the embodied person, and since there is a plurality of individual jivas there are differences in the form of ignorance in each individual (see Mahadevan, 1985, p. 29). As noted, Vācaspati's Bhāmati school prefers a combination of knowledge and action in its removal. It also holds that merely listening to the Vedāntic texts is not enough for attaining self-realization; continued meditation *(praṣamkhyāna)* is essential. On these matters, the Vivaraṇa school[21] disagrees with the Bhamati school. As to the importance of meditation, the following observation may be made: Mere listening to the doctrines of Advaita Vedanta, or studying them in an impersonal and academic way, often seems to lead to mere scholarship *(pāṇḍityam)* and not necessarily to the annihilation of ignorance and to the resultant divesting of the ego of its power over the individual's life. The removal of the veil of misconstrued notions of the self must open up an inner source of infinite bliss for the individual. If this happens, then there should be no need for the individual to yearn for objects of enjoyment and to guard and preserve them for one's own use. This in turn should manifest in the diminution of egoism and the increase in selfless and compassionate behavior toward others.

The main point here is that Self-knowledge *(svarūpajñānam* or *ātma sākṣāt kara)*[22] as understood in Advaita Vedānta is not a matter of impersonal mastery of the theory of selfhood. It involves a direct realization of one's inner Being attained through a deeply personal quest that radically transforms the inquirer inside and out. In addition to critical study of the doctrines of Advaita Vedānta it involves contemplation, or "meditation" as the process is commonly called. From the ancient Upanisads to modem times, Vedāntists have recommended a process of studying, reflection, and contemplation *(śravana, manana, nididhyāsana)* as steps to take for attaining self-realization. This process was outlined in general terms in the previous chapter. Here, I shall try first to describe it in the technical terms used in several Advaita Vedāntic texts, and then to interpret it in the language and idiom of cognitive psychology and hermeneutics.

Most Vedāntic texts offer a clear and unanimous account of what is involved in meditation *(prasaṁkhyāna)* regardless of their differing views on its relative importance and efficacy in leading to self-realization. Meditation as recommended

by Advaita Vedāntic texts involves primarily *manana* and *nididhyasana,* i.e., repeated reflection and deep contemplation, of the fundamental doctrines of Advaita Vedānta.[23] Meditation is alternatively referred to as *dhyāna* or *upāsanā.* In *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* (3.90), Sureśvara (1980) describes meditation *(prasaṁkhyāna)* as the repeated attempt to understand the meaning of sentences like "Thou art that" by means of reasoning according the method of agreement and difference.[24] In his commentary on this statement, Jñānottama clarifies that the primary purpose of this rational activity is to dispel every possible misconstrued notion of selfhood by testing its agreement or disagreement with the meaning of one of the great sentences *(mahāvākyas),* such as "Thou art that," that asserts the identity of the Self or Ātman with Brahman.[25]

To put it in the context of contemporary psychology, let us assume that one writes down an exhaustive self-description listing all kinds of sentences that come to mind. Then one begins examining each statement in light of the great sentence, "Thou art that." The meditator may follow Advaita Vedāntic texts such as the *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka* and rule out every self-definition implying self-as-seen, i.e., self-as-object in Jamesian terms, as a false statement. This would eliminate all definitions of the self in terms of possessions, body, social roles, and attitudes and opinions as falsehoods in regard to the true Self, which is the pure subject. Another acid test for true or false would be to make a "wise discrimination" between the self and the nonself such that the true self is that which is permanent. According to this criterion, all the self-definitions that are already "abandoned selves," as Erikson calls them, as well as the anticipated "future selves," as Markus calls them, are to be abandoned as pseudoselves. For, that which is permanent must be valid in the past, present, as well as the future, and could neither be abandoned nor anticipated. In *Pancadaśī* (1.37), Vidyaranya (1982) recommends that the method of agreement and difference be applied systematically to examine all the five "sheaths" of the *jīva,* meaning the self-definitions relevant to every aspect of one's personhood.

Such an exercise appears deceptively simple; it would seem to be an appropriate exercise for an undergraduate psychology class. Yet it aims at nothing less than prying loose from its foundations a person's deeply entrenched sense of ego-identity. The critical self-examination demanded by the Advaita Vedātic method requires pondering the nature of personal identity, which is a difficult notion that has eluded some of the mightiest intellectuals. Moreover, meditation is not an impersonal exercise to be engaged in purely in an intellectual manner; it is the most deeply personal inquiry that threatens the dearest and the most cherished aspects of selfhood. What binds the individual to his or her favorite self-definitions is investment of affect in "selfobjects," as the ego-psychologists call them. Diluting the glue of intense love (or hatred) may not be easily accomplished by purely intellectual means. The Advaita Vedāntic methodology does contain a solution for diluting the bonds of attachment, namely, the cultivation of dispassionateness or detachment. Dubbed as the "detachment with regard to gains in this or the otherworldly life" *(ihāmutra-phala-virāga),* the cultivation of dispas-

sionateness is listed as the second of the four aids that the Advaita Vedānta wants aspirants to self-realization to acquire (see Chapter 3, this volume). For most aspirants, this is not a very easy "aid" to acquire in a hurry on the way to self-realization. The cultivation of detachment requires a fair bit of work by way of the modification of how one *feels* about various things in life. And this kind of work cannot be merely intellectual. That is why some Vedāntists recommend combining the "path of knowledge" with the "path of devotion" *(bhakti mārga),* which deals with the emotional aspects of selfhood. We shall examine the nature of this path in the next chapter.

From Thinking to Awareness Without Thought

One of the aspects of changes in the meditator described in the Vedāntic texts is the radical change in the meditator's state of consciousness from the intense process of critical *thinking* about selfhood to the experience of the "no-thought zone" of consciousness. Meditation is said to promote concentration of the mind, so that the mind in deep contemplation *(nididhyāsana)* becomes fully rested *(samāhita)* in the Ātman–Brahman. In a fully rested mind, the stream of thoughts seems to come to a halt, and the mind is emptied of any and all thought contents. Why would such a thing happen? The idea here is that, through relentless self-examination, all self-definitions in terms of self-as-object are defeated; all doubts in this regard are dispelled; and the mind is thereby completely cleared of misconstrued notions of the self and the consequent confusion, which is the main stumbling block on the path to wisdom. The Bhagavad-Gītā (6.19) uses the metaphor of a lamp sitting in a place protected from breeze to describe a mind in a state of repose. Stable resting of the mind is the defining feature of *samādhi,* the "altered state of consciousness" much hallowed in the Indian tradition in general, and in Yoga in particular. In accounting for the nature of deep contemplation *(nididhyāsana),* some Advaita Vedāntists-Mādhava and Sadānanda, for example-use Yogic terminology, describing it as *dhyāna.* According to Patañjali's Yoga, deep contemplation involves "the unchanging flow, of the mental effort to understand the object of meditation, untouched by any other effort of the understanding."[26] In other words, at the advanced stage of meditation one is able to sustain some specific content of cognition for an extended period of time without being distracted by other thoughts. This is said to be the penultimate state that automatically leads to a series of "altered states of consciousness," collectively called the *samādhi.* While the Yoga system describes a set of distinct, hierarchically ordered stages of the *samādhi* experience, the Advaita Vedānta system speaks of only one, and characterizes it as the *nirvikalpa samādhi* The experience of this state is said to be essentially indescribable. Nevertheless, several texts provide various verbal accounts that attempt to indicate its nature. Let me try to interpret such accounts as relevant to the current context.

In Advaita Vedānta, as in Yoga, meditation is suggested as a way of ridding

the mind of "ignorance" or *avidyā,* i.e., any and all misconstrued notions of the Self. During this process, the mind is temporarily emptied of all cognitive constructions; it enters what may be called a "no-thought zone of consciousness" *(nirvikalpa samādhi).* Here, as in the case of the concept of *nirvikapa pratyakṣa* explained before, the term nirvikalpa does indicate the absence of analysis, interpretation, or meaning, plus something more. In *Vivekacūḍāmani* (verse #241), Śaṅkara (1921) defines *nirvikalpa samādhi* as a state devoid of the distinction between the knower, known, and knowledge.[27] What this means is that, during the state of *nirvikalpa samādhi,* the meditator's experience is devoid of the separation commonly obtained between (1) the experiencing *subject,* (2) the *object* thought, and (3) the *construal* that the object is thus and such. To help interpret what this means in the context of contemporary psychology, it is necessary to understand what Franz Brentano meant by the *intentionality,* i.e., directedness of thought processes, and its analysis by Edmund Husserl. The nature and significance of intentionality is a complex issue that is being studied intensively in contemporary philosophy and cognitive science (e.g., Searle, 1983; Dennett, 1987). It is neither possible nor necessary to explore all its aspects here; given the focus on the Advaita Vedānta perspective and contemporary psychology, my discussion will be restricted to select ideas of Brentano, Husserl, and Harré.

Intentionality of Consciousness: Brentano, Husserl, and Harré

As noted in Chapter 2, Brentano (187411974) suggested that consciousness is always *directed* toward something, so that one is afraid *of* something, wishes *for* something, aims at something or the other, and so on. Following Brentano's footsteps, Husserl (1933/1977, p. 66) suggested that being conscious involves: (1) the transcendental Ego, the selfsame I at the subject pole, (2) various entities, actual or imagined- like a mermaid- at the object pole toward which the mind is directed, and (3) consciousness, which connects the two poles. The similarity between this trilogy and the Vedāntic trilogy of knower, object to be known, and knowledge should be obvious. Despite this fundamental similarity between them, Husserl's view of consciousness is different from the Vedāntic view in one important respect. Husserl insisted that consciousness is *always* consciousness of something, thus denying the possibility of nonintentional states of awareness. By sharp contrast, the Advaita Vedāntists not only claim that the experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi* is devoid of intentionality, but they also value it very highly. The discovery and theorization about extraordinary states of awareness and Being and the development of techniques for realizing them are specialties of the Eastern intellectual and cultural traditions. This is not to say that such states are exclusive to certain parts of the world; indeed, they are probably recognized in various areas across the world throughout the history. However, in the West, they seem to be associated with mysticism, a phenomenon that has been often misunderstood, tabooed, and mar-

ginalized. Such marginalization is specifically true for contemporary psychology. Psychologists also tend to ignore Husserl, who generally has been assigned to philosophy. A brief introduction to Husserl's ideas should therefore be in order.

As noted in Chapter 1, Husserl had imbibed the spirit of the Greek theoria and shunned the "vocation-like life-interest" and practical attitude typical. of the Indian and Chinese cultures. Consistent with this spirit of knowledge-for-its-own-sake, Husserl's primary goal was to attain "apodictic" (i.e., absolutely certain) knowledge. Although very proud of his Greek–European intellectual heritage, Husserl was nevertheless dissatisfied with the dominance in the Europe of his time of the objectivist attitude that denigrated subjective experience. In his view, the result of this attitude was a tendency to annex the spirit to the body, a tendency that was so pernicious that it prompted him to write the "Crisis of European Man" (Husserl, 1936/1965). Against this background, Husserl set out to examine the origin of knowledge in subjective experience. To help turn the mind inward, he decided to suspend or "bracket" all judgments regarding objects in the natural order of space and time and to focus instead on how the mind acquires knowledge of the essence of a given object that underlies the varied and changing images of the same object in the mind. Underlying this search was Kant's idea that the transcendental Ego was the knower that produced knowledge by synthesizing sensory data into the unity of apperception. Husserl hoped to obtain apodictic knowledge by catching the mind in the very act of uniting sensory data into the knowledge of essences.

It is hard to point to any absolute certainties gleaned or solid theoretical gains made by Husserl's studies. At least one historian of Western philosophy has said that in the end, "Husserl's energy was more and more distracted into the Pandora's box of metaphysical and epistemological puzzles that he thought his phenomenological method had eliminated" (Jones, 1975, Vol. 5, p. 280). Nevertheless, during the course of his explorations, Husserl developed a methodology of "phenomenological reduction" or epoché (εποχη in Greek). Husserl (1931/1962) has described them in detail in his book, Ideas. Without going into the details of the reductive methodology, it may be noted that an important aspect of his procedure involved turning attention away from the objects of awareness first to the sensory contents of consciousness (noma), and then deeper and deeper into the innermost reaches of subjective experience till one reaches the subject of experience. Husserl characterizes consciousness as essentially bipolar in nature in that he placed the varied objects of consciousness at the "object pole" and the transcendental Ego at the identical or selfsame "subject pole" (Husserl, 1933/1977, p. 66). Thus, in Husserl's view, consciousness is a link, as it were, that connects a single subject with an array of innumerable objects of intentional awareness. In his writings, Husserl repeatedly asserts that consciousness is always a consciousness of something, thereby suggesting that intentionality is an ineluctable feature of consciousness. This view of consciousness is affirmed repeatedly by J-P. Sartre, who

followed Husserl's footsteps. Such a view implicitly denies the possibility of nonintentional states of awareness, such as the *nirvikalpa samādhi,* which, according to Advaita Vedānta, lacks the subject –object polarization.

As several authors (Sinari, 1965; Puligandla, 1970; Paranjpe & Hanson, 1988) have pointed out, Husserl's phenomenological reduction resembles Patañjali's Yoga. First, both involve withdrawing attention from the object, turning inward toward the experience, and ultimately trying to reach the center of experience. Second, phenomenological reduction involves a systematic attempt to modify one's own thought processes. Notwithstanding Husserl's insistence on being purely theoretical, his phenomenological reduction involved *doing* something with one's own consciousness rather than merely thinking about its nature. Thus, Eugen Fink (1933/1970), a trusted student of Husserl, said in his authoritative overview of his teacher's work that "[phenomenological] reduction not only signifies an appeal to its actual performance, but also necessarily requires the performance of an act which places us beyond the horizon of our own possibilities, which 'transcends' our human possibilities" (p. 105). This emphasis on not simply studying but *doing* phenomenology [28] resembles the Yogic emphasis on knowing Yoga by actually *doing* Yoga.[29] Moreover, although Husserl denigrated the practical and religious bent of Indian thought, his own practice of phenomenological reduction produced an apparently unintended practical benefit of a religious nature. To put it in Husserl's own words, it led to "a complete personal transformation (Wadlung) which might be compared to a religious conversion, but which even beyond it has the significance of the greatest existential conversion that is expected of mankind" (translated by and quoted in Spiegelberg, 1965, Vol. 1, p. 136).

It is ironic, indeed, that a methodology intended to explore purely theoretical issues produces an apparently valuable "personal transformation" and an "existential conversion." Had Husserl pursued his line of work, perhaps he could have developed some effective methods of personal transformation similar to those of Yoga, and made them available to humankind. It is difficult to say whether Husserl knew of Yoga and other systems of Indian thought, as did many German academics of his day. Nevertheless, given his own expressions of disdain for Indian and Chinese thought, any attempts by him toward East–West convergence seemed out of the question. Unfortunately, despite promises of valuable transformation of the self by means of phenomenological reduction, Husserl abandoned the further development of his methods. His students, too, abandoned the methods of reduction, and the phenomenological movement turned instead toward hermeneutics.

More recently, Hamé (1983) has joined the ranks of Western authors who claim that consciousness must always be intentional. He makes this by way of criticism of publications in the 1970s about "altered states of consciousness," which he dismisses as a kind of "rash of talk," and as noted earlier in this chapter, assigns it to "fringe psychology." In his opinion, the idea of "altered states" of consciousness

> has been formulated in a rather muddled way.... Those 'states' seem to be experiences of novel kinds of intentional objects or novel appearances of ordinary objects.... For a being to be conscious at all, the relational pencil from the self to a field of various objects of awareness, some of which can be attended to, must be maintained. (1983, p. 163)

That nonintentional states can in fact be experienced is a claim made by students of Yoga, who for centuries have been publishing books and papers on how to attain them. Interested persons are invited to try their methods and verify the claims. Denying the claims out of hand without trying the methods reminds us of the Aristotelian scholars who refused to look into Galileo's telescope to verify his claims about Jupiter's satellites. Belief in the inevitability of intentionality seems to be as pervasive today in the West as was the presumption that functions of the autonomic nervous system such as the pulse rate could not be brought under voluntary control. And maybe this belief about intentionality will change just as the presumption about the autonomic functions was changed after the results of psychophysiological experiments on Yogis became widely known.

As just noted, Husserl claimed that his phenomenological reduction resulted in a personal transformation that seemed extremely valuable. However, even Husserl's students, such as Fink, seemed to ignore them; they did not think it was important enough to follow up. In his famous work on the history of the phenomenological movement, Herbert Spiegelberg does mention Husserl's "greatest existential conversion that is expected of mankind," but he literally relegates it to a mere footnote. Likewise, as noted earlier in this chapter, Harré is aware of the claim that persons who attain altered states tend to become selfless, but apparently he fails to see the importance of such an outcome. One gets the impression that in Western philosophy and psychology there is a cultivated sense of aversion for any kind of personal transformation. By sharp contrast, personal transformation was the raison d'être of several systems of Indian philosophy and psychology such as Śaṅkhya Yoga, and Vedānta. To help understand this remarkable contrast, it would be useful to take a look at certain aspects of the cultural history of the West noted by Michel Foucault.

Psychology and the "Technologies of the Self"

In an essay titled "Technologies of the Self," Michel Foucault (1982/1988) presented historical analysis of the development in the West of the "hermeneutics of the self" in two different but related contexts: the Greco-Roman philosophy and Christian spirituality. In this essay he considers both theories as well as practices in relation to the twin injunctions, "Know yourself" and "Take care of yourself." In this context, he describes the "technologies of the self" as practices that

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1982/1988, p. 18)

It should be clear that the Advaita Vedāntic program for self-realization can be correctly characterized as a "technology of the self" in a Foucauldian sense. It selectively combines the features of certain distinct Western prototypes: (1) Plato's concern with "Know thyself" and his dialogical approach to it in predominantly "secular" or nondenominational context; (2) St. Augustine's deeply personal critical self-examination and spiritual yearning; and (3) the spiritual practices and the relevance of exegesis of scriptural texts in that context as illustrated in the *Spiritual Practices of Saint Ignatius* (see Ambruzzi, 1961). Such comparisons have of course serious limitations, for there are important differences as well. Thus, while St. Augustine's concern with sin and Vedāntic concern with *suffering* seem to be comparable in their depth and sincerity, *sin* and suffering are two very different types of the human condition. They are based on radically different notions of cosmogony, causality, and justice. These, in turn, are different from the Freudian and existentialist views of the human condition and of therapy.

Indeed, it is hard to name even a single system in the mainstream of contemporary psychology that can be said to offer a technology of the self in the Foucauldian sense. The varied applications of modern psychology have developed mainly in the contexts of medicine, the military, education, industry, and commerce. In all these contexts, the psychologists tend to emulate the role of either a professional doctor who offers diagnosis and cure, or of a technologist who provides advice on how to fix a faulty mechanism. There are of course applications of psychology in the contexts of spirituality and religion. However, these are sequestered away from the academe and handed over to the church where the pastoral psychologists try to heal sick souls. There is a strict division between the secular universities on the one hand and the religious institutions on the other. It seems as if the scientists are still nursing the wounds of Galileo, who was hurt by the Aristotelian scholastics as well as by churchmen of his times.

The development of modern psychology as a *science* contributed to the lack of the development of technologies of the self within the field of modem psychology in North America. From its beginning in Europe in the 17th century, science had little to do with purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality, which were the typical concerns of the traditional technologies of the self. Francis Bacon's vision of science was clearly that of mastering the forces of nature for the benefit of the humankind. As noted, J. B. Watson launched a behaviorist psychology modeled after the natural sciences, Max Meyer (1922) tried to banish the self along with the theologian's soul from psychology, and B. F. Skinner explicitly followed Meyer's "psychology of the other-one" in develping his behavioral technology. In contrast, Yoga is clearly a technology of the self; it has developed techniques for controlling one's *own* body and mind. Technologies for *controlling others* can be understandably different from technologies such as those of Yoga and Vedānta, which are explicitly aimed at the *emancipating oneself* from suffering arising from misconstrued notions of one's own making.

ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC MEDITATION, PSYCHOTHERAPY, AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

As noted in Chapter 3, Śaṅkara uses a medical metaphor, describing Advaita Vedāntic meditation *(sādhanā)* as a combination of knowledge and dispassionate-ness prescribed as a cure for the "fever" of insatiable desires.[30] In the same vein, in his commentary on Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (1978, 2.15), Vyāsa suggests that suffering is the disease; mistaken identification of the unchanging Self (*Puruṣa*) with the ever-changing world *(Prakṛti)* is the cause of the disease; correct vision (samyagdarsanam) is the medicine; and complete riddance of mistaken identity is the desired state of health. As noted by Halbfass (1991b, Ch. 7), such medical metaphors have been common to many systems of Indian thought. Against this background, Advaita Vedāntic meditation is comparable to the forms of psycho-therapy developed by Aaron Beck and by George Kelly. The main point of similarity that justifies the comparison of these otherwise different enterprises is that both use what may be called *cognitive devices* in bringing about a desirable change in an individual's life.

Aaron Beck suggests what he calls the "Socratic method" as a therapeutic strategy to cure depression (Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985, pp. 177-178). What Beck means by it is that the patient is to be engaged in a dialogue of questions and answers guided by logic in a manner typical of Socrates's search for wisdom through dialectical and critical thinking. The traditional Indian method has an uncanny resemblance to the Socratic dialectics. The ancient Upaniṣads contain several dialogues designed to convey to the listener wisdom concerning the nature of the true Self. Innumerable philosophical texts in India are written in the format of conversations between the proponent of a viewpoint and his adversaries in debate. This is very similar to the spirit of the Socratic dialogues, and Beck has tried to introduce this type of a format in his therapeutic intervention designed to cure depression. The similarity of its aim and method to Śaṅkara's idea of critical self-examination as a method to cure the desires arising from ignorance should now be obvious. Instead of discussing this similarity in detail, it would be better to turn to George Kelly's therapeutic strategy, since I think it will properly bring out the nature of the cognitive aspects of the Advaita Vedāntic method of meditation.

Kelly's therapeutic strategy may be characterized as a systematic cognitive *reconstruction* of the individual's view of herself and the world around her. The therapist attempts first to identify erroneous constructs that are ineffective in correctly predicting significant events in the client's life, and then help her replace them with more accurate- or serviceable- constructs. This implies an attempt to help improve the client's adaptation with her environment. Advaita Vedānta, too, focuses on an individual's cognitive constructs, but the aim there is not simply to change a few constructs here and there, but rather to have the individual dismantle, or at least temporarily suspend, *all* of the constructs that define her self in relation to the world. What makes this process particularly similar to the Kellyian therapy

is that both pit the current constructs against their opposites and/or alternatives to seriously question, loosen, weaken, or discard established constructs. Kelly's constructs are dichotomous or bipolar, and as noted in the first part of this chapter, his technique calls for a "slot movement" of an item back and forth from one pole of the construct to its opposite. For instance, a person who characterizes himself as a weakling may be asked to move this characterization back and forth between the opposite poles, self versus nonself (I am weak versus I am not weak), so that the image of being a weakling is loosened from the self pole, and after repeated attempts, identified with the nonself. It is important to remember in this context that the Advaita Vedāntic method asks a meditator to use the method of agreement and difference *(anvaya, vyatireka).* Any and all definitions of the self as an object- as body, social roles, and so on- are to be loosened and detached from the self-pole and moved to the opposite side to the nonself. Given the strong emotional attachments of the "I" with the "Me," it requires innumerable attempts to separate them. The changes that Advaita Vedānta tries to bring about in a meditator are far more radical and far-reaching, since they aim at what Kelly calls "core constructs," i.e., constructs that define and maintain a person's very identity and existence.

Meditation may be viewed as a severe attack on a person's psychosocial identity. A spiritual aspirant who successfully completes the prescribed course of meditation would recognize his or her psychosocial identity to be just what it is: a product of the past that is functional in carrying on the bodily functions and social life, but not something inextricably attached to the "I." No matter how strongly one feels attached to the self-definitions that comprise one's psychosocial identity, none of them are inexorable. As noted in the previous chapter, Erik Erikson concluded that psychosocial identity is forever revisable, which means that any and all self-definitions could in principle be suspended. The ultimate basis of self-sameness does not reside in any aspect of one's psychosocial identity; it resides, as Erikson suggested, in one's *transcendental* center of awareness. To put it in other words, the unity and selfsameness of the "I" is fully realized as belonging to the Being of the blissful consciousness and not to the "evolving configuration of roles" that parades as one and the same person.

Sometimes meditation is said to focus on the destruction of the mind *(manonāśa),* or "egocide," i.e., killing of the ego. Moreover, with the attainment of self-realization, a spiritual aspirant is said to end his or her life. Having realized its true nature, the soul is said to shed the body with which it felt erroneously identified. Such a result has been called *videha mukti,* i.e., the attainment of emancipation upon death. However, according to an alternative view, persons continue to live after attaining self-realization in a state called *jīvanmukti,* i.e., the state of emancipation while still alive. We shall consider the affective and behavioral characteristics of self-realized persons in the next two chapters. Here, let us try to understand the nature of Vedāntic meditation in the language of "deconstruction."

MEDITATION AND "DECONSTRUCTION"

In an essay published in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology,* Mark Epstein (1988) has suggested that Buddhist "insight meditation" involves a "deconstruction of the self." Edward Sampson (1989) has used the same expression, "deconstruction of the self," to designate several recent trends in Western thought, all of which, in his opinion, are rejecting the "North American version of psychology's subject- as a self -contained individualism" (p. 1). Of these trends, he has chosen to analyze the psychological implication of the challenges to individualistic conceptions of selfhood from two trends: (1) critical theory originating in the Frankfurt School, and (2) "deconstructionism," a "relatively recent perspective developed within the post-structuralist literary criticism and linguistic analysis [which] has challenged all notions that involve the primacy of the subject (or author)" (p. 1). "Deconstruction" is a popular term that has acquired differing meanings. It is tempting to use this term to describe the analysis of "insight" meditation of the Advaita Vedāntic and Buddhist traditions for the following reasons:

1. In view of the "constructed" *(kalpita)* nature of the ego or empirical self, Advaita Vedānta seems to call for its "deconstruction." If, according to Śaṅkara's metaphor, the individual can be thought of as a moth living in a cocoon of its own construction, then we can imagine the "unpacking" of a worldview of one's own cognitive construction so as to liberate oneself from its limitations.
2. Deconstruction primarily involves the critical analysis of texts and of the grounds of the theoretical systems contained therein (Johnson, 1981, p. xv). The Advaita Vedāntic method quite clearly requires an in-depth critical analysis *(manana)* of the Upaniṣadic texts and an understanding of the foundations of its system in addition to other requirements.
3. The concept or the *erasure* of false conceptions leading to the *transparency* of consciousness is a metaphor common to Advaita Vedānta as well as Derrida (1966/1978). (This point will be discussed, as it deserves clarification.)
4. As noted by Johnson (1981):

> [A]s Derrida himself admits, the very notion of a perfectly adequate science or *-logy* belongs to the logocentric discourse which the science of writing would try, precisely, to put in question. Derrida thus finds himself in the uncomfortable position of attempting to account for an error by means of tools derived from that very error. (p. x; emphasis original)

The situation is similar in Advaita Vedānta, which tries to use language and dialectical thinking to prove their own limits and to put themselves out of action.

5. Gayatri Spivak (1976) translates Derrida's term "sous rature" as "under-erasure" and explains it thus: "This is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both the word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible)" (p. xiv). In a similar vein, the Advaita Vedāntic program of self-realization may be said to aim at "erasing" the empirical ego of a person *without* eradicating it beyond recognition or putting it *totally* out of commission. At least, in my opinion, such would be the view of the school of Advaita Vedāntists that believes that self-realized persons continue to live after attaining enlightenment as liberated souls (jīvanmukta). (This is of course different from the other school that believes in the discontinuation of life upon liberation, called *videhamukti.)* Thus, Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), who was widely believed to be a self-realized being, had "crossed out" his identity as the son of Sundaram Ayyar and Alagammal, but he was recognized as the same village lad, Ramana, by his relatives after he lived incognito for years while practicing meditation or *sādhanā* Although the relatives of Ramana knew beyond a doubt that this was the same person as the lad who had grown up in their midst, he treated them with no special attachment, as might be expected from a normal individual. He showed no signs of ego involvement, thereby indicating that his childhood ego-identity had been defeated. To put it in deconstructionist terms, the entity "Ramana" in the box has been crossed out, although it is still recognizable.

Notwithstanding such similarities between Derridan deconstruction and program of meditation recommended by the Advaita Vedānta, there are some fundamental differences between them: While the former is an approach to literary criticism and remains as such, the latter, having its roots in exegesis of scriptural texts, has developed into a full-scale philosophy, theory of personality, technique of meditation, and a way of life. Moreover, despite Advaita Vedānta's emphasis on the critical understanding of scriptural texts, its primary purpose is to apply the meaning to one's own life and to undertake to deconstruct the ego and the world of one's own construction.

If, indeed, the ego can be deconstructed as claimed here, what, we may ask, happens to the cognitive processes of the person after the deconstruction is completed? The *Bhagavad-Gītā* provides clues for an answer to this question in its descriptions of persons after they attain liberation following the path of knowledge according to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga *(Bhagavad-Gītā,* 2.54-72), or of devotion according to the Bhakti-Yoga (12.13-19), or in other ways of spiritual self-

discipline (5.5–28;14.22–27).The cognitive aspect of such individuals' functioning is described commonly in terms of a stable intellect *(sthitaprajña).* As noted in the previous chapter, such persons no longer behave in egoistic or selfish ways. Against the backdrop of the discussion in this chapter so far, we can try to understand in terms of cognitive principles what this means and why such results must follow from the process of deconstruction. First, it must be taken for granted that any living person, whether liberated or otherwise, must depend on sensory, perceptual, and cognitive structures and processes for carrying on one's daily business in life. What meditation is supposed to put out of commission is the narrowness of a person's ego, or its "totalitarian" character, not his or her cognitive capacities. I think it is safe to assume that the normal strengths as well as inherent limits of such adjuncts *(upādhi)* would persist in the individual after the ego is deconstructed Presumably, the person retains all the language skills acquired since childhood, as well the dialectical skills honed during the process of meditation. What may be lost is the kind of influence that the ego exerts on cognition.

To put it in metaphorical terms, loosened under the attack of relentless questioning, the "I" is no longer inextricably tied down to the ego; rather, it is firmly anchored in the transcognitive and unchanging Brahman. As such, the ongoing cognitive processes are not allowed to sway every which way with the continually changing pattern of the ego's attachments; as such, they are stabilized. In my opinion, it is in this sense that the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (1948/1973, 2.54–72) describes the self-realized person as a person with a stable intellect *(sthitaprajña).*

The effects of anchoring and stabilizing one's intellect may be described within the cognitive frameworks of Greenwald and Markus, discussed previously. It may be recalled that, according to Greenwald (1980), the self-serving character of the ego introduces biases in the cognitive functioning such that the individual tends to revise one's past history and narratives of events that erroneously perceive the self to be more correct, nicer, and more effective than deserved. In many instances, such egocentricity results in totalitarian attitudes whereby a person tends to unthinkingly reject ideas that do not fit one's currently held beliefs and opinions. If indeed the ego has repeatedly weighed mutually opposing arguments, has tried to go beyond dialectics, and has become more tolerant of contrary opinions, then it may have no reason to have excessive liking for friends who agree and excessive dislike for enemies who disagree. True to this spirit, the *Gītā* described the self-realized person as manifesting equanimity in the face of friends and enemies, praise and blame. Such a person need not also indulge in constructing and revising images of the self in the past and the future, and feel happy or sad depending on whether the possible selves seem positive or negative, as described by Markus and Nurius (1987). A person who has discovered the true Self in the eternal and blissful Ātman–Brahman would have discovered an inner source of undiminishing joy. He or she need not construe the "I" as an imaginary future

self; one who is achored in Being here and now need no longer be infatuated with Becoming happy in the future.

Ordinarily, one's sense of identity is anchored in one's current thoughts, feelings, and actions. While this is common experience, it has been acknowledged by Patañjali in ancient times and by James and Erikson in modern times. Being closely attached to the current thought often results in the sense that it represents *the* truth, sometimes leading to egotism and to intolerance of alternative positions. One can overcome such egotism and intolerance by being firmly convinced that the true Self is beyond all thoughts and the current Thinker. Such conviction can follow from the discovery of the no-thought-zone of consciousness by means of meditation. The discovery of the no-thought-zone may be explained in terms of the Freudian metaphor of the mind as a "mystic writing-pad" (Freud, 1925/1953), which Jacques Derrida (1966/1978) has revived in the context of his account of deconstruction. This metaphor likens the mind to a child's toy in which words written or marks made using a wooden stylus on a translucent sheet overlying a wax tablet are visible as long as the translucent sheet remains attached to the wax. When the sheet is pulled up, the words or marks disappear. The human mind may be likened to the top sheet of the "mystic writing-pad" insofar as it is devoid of content in its nascent state and allows limitless rewriting of its contents. The trick lies in being able to empty mind's contents; one way of doing so is to recognize that current thoughts are not absolute but only relative truths, and to set them aside like letting the writing stay on the wax rather than on the translucent top sheet of the writing pad, as it were. Critical self-examination is a way of accomplishing this. In several articles, Ashok Gangadean (1976,1979) has explained the Buddhist use of dialectics and the Vedāntic methods of meditation in this context, and has interpreted the process in the light of Western philosophy and logic from Plato and Aristotle to Wittgenstein and Frege. Space does not permit further discussion of this topic.

Liberation with Knowledge Only or with Other Means

Before concluding this chapter on self and cognition, it may be noted, once again, that Śaṅkara and several of his followers consider knowledge, or "cognition" as we may call it, to be the *only* means to self-realization. As noted by Suryanarayana Sastri (194111961, p. 241), Advaita Vedāntists were not unaware of the contention that cognition itself is a mental act. Yet they made a sharp distinction between cognition on the one hand and action in the form of performing rituals and meditation on the other. Their defense of this distinction was primarily the argument that cognition is dependent on objects that it is expected to faithfully reflect, while activity is optional, depending on the will of the performer. As such, while cognition is expected to lead to an unconditional outcome, action is not. Whatever the arguments in defense of cognition, overemphasis on it was perhaps

important in view of the repudiation of the heavy reliance on ritual in the rival school of Mīmāṁsā

Be that as it may, as noted earlier, several Advaita Vedāntists followed Mandana Miśra in avoiding a sharp distinction between cognition and action, and advocated a combination of cognition and action in the attainment of self-realization. As well, according to some interpreters, the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* one of three basic source books of Vedānta,[31] advocates nonattachment to the outcomes of action as a means to liberation, although Śaṅkara insists on the efficacy of knowledge *alone.* However, Śaṅkara is not opposed to devotion as an alternative means to liberation. Indeed, he even considers it to be an excellent means to liberation, except that he defines it not so much as love for God, but rather as investigaiton into the nature of selfhood. Śaṅkara himself is said to have been the author of several devotional poems that express somewhat strong feelings, but these are sequestered from his voluminous writings, which are terse and generally "dry." He was not given to the sentimentalism that seems to be the hallmark of those for whom devotion to God is their preferred approach to self-transformation. In the next chapter, we shall return to this topic after considering the psychological implications of devotion within the context of the relationship between self and affect.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Professor John Broughton for helping me clarify the Piagetian concepts such as the epistemic subject and egocentricity, and for his numerous useful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.
2. For a detailed discussion of Piaget's concept of the epistemic subject, see Broughton (1987).
3. A fuller discussion of Piaget's views on the implications for epistemology of Gödel's theorem may be found in Beth and Piaget (1966, pp. 53–59).
4. The reference cited here by Piaget is P. Natrop's *Die logischen Grundlagen des exacten Wissenschaften,* published in Berlin in 1910.
5. Scrooge is the name of a character in Charles Dickens's famous story, *A Christmas Carol,* in which Scrooge gets completely transformed from a stingy and nasty man to a generous and nice man after being visited by three ghosts. This classic was originally published in 1843, and is widely available in numerous editions.
6. Harré's attitudes about "altered states" are reflected in many pejorative expressions in his writing. Thus, he talks about the *rash* of talk about the *alleged* altered states, and repeatedly refers to the literature on it as lying on the *fringe* of psychology (see Harré, 1983, pp. 163–165). That the literature on altered states is widely viewed as being on the fringe of mainstream psychology partly reflects the attitudes of the mainstream, and it seems to me that partly the questionable reputation of this field of studies is a result of wishy-washy and nonrigorous nature of several publications on altered states.
7. In his translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* Radhakrishnan (1948/1973, p. 355) mentions Śaṅkara's (1978, 18.14) expression *kartā upādhilakṣaṇo bhoktā,* and adds the adjective *avidyākalpito* meaning "constructed from nescience," or imagined. I could not find the word *avidyākalpito* in the Motilal

Banarsidass edition of Śaṅkara's commentary of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (18.14). However, I find such characterization consistent with Śaṅkara's discussion of the nature of the self-as-knower (*kṣetrajña*) in his commentary on *Gītā* (13.2).

8. nanu pramāśrayah pramātā sa evā karta bhoktā | (Abhyankar, 1928/1962, p. 19).
9. I am grateful to Professor Gaya Charan Tripathi for enlightening me regarding the nuances of Sanskrit teminology in this matter, and its Latin, Greek, English, and other Indo-European parallels.
10. For a detailed discussion of *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa pratyakṣa,* see D. M. Datta (1932/1972, pp. 93–102). In his *History of Philosophy,* S. N. Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1) discusses the distinction between *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa pratyakṣa* in the context of the various schools of Indian thought: Sāṅkya-Yoga (p. 261), Nyāya-Vaiśesika (p. 334), Mīmāṁsā (p. 378), and Vedānta (p. 484).
11. The oft-quoted lines of the *Īśa* Upaniṣad (#11) are as follows:

    vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yastadvedobhayaṁsaha|
    avidayā mṛtyum tīrtvā vidyayā 'mrtamaśnute||

    The exact meanings of the concepts of *vidyā* and *avidyā* are controversial, and are difficult to interpret in Western terms. A discussion of some of the problems in interpretation can be found in Belwalkar and Ranade (1927, Vol. 2, pp. 171–174).
12. In a footnote to his discussion about indeterminate perception, Datta (1932/1972, p. 97) quotes the following words from *Siddhānta-candrikā,* a commentary on a Mīmāṁsā text called *Śāstra-dīpikā:* "Tiraścām bālānāñ ca nirvikalpakenaiva sarvo vyavahārah|". To paraphrase, the activities of animals and children are characterized by only an undifferentiated form of perception.
13. As pointed out by D. M. Datta (1932/1972), Vedātic writings on perception are neither very elaborate nor entirely clear. Nevertheless, Datta's own analysis in *Six Ways of Knowing* clarifies the Vedātic view of perception and cognition. His analysis is particularly useful for us because Datta interprets the Vedātic view not only in the context of the six major schools of Indian thought, but also in the light of early 20th-century Western thought. My reconstruction of Vedantic views of perception and cognition follows Datta's analysis.
14. S. Radhakrishnan (1960/1968, p. 227) translates ''athāto brahmajijñāsa" as "Now therefore the desire to know Brahman."
15. na hy jñānena sadrśaṁ pavitramiha vidyate| Bhagavad-Gītā (4.38).
16. Taittirīya Upaniṣad, 2.1.
17. Says Dharmarāja (1972, Ch. VIII, p. 203): "tatra sukhaduḥkābhāvau mukhye prayojane," i.e., "there [in Vedānta] attainment of happiness and removal of suffering are the two main goals."
18. abrahmastambaparyantaih sarvaprāṇibhiḥ sarvaprakārasyāpi duḥkasya svarasata eva jihāsitattvattannivṛttyartha pravṛttirasti svarasata eva | Opening sentence of Sureśvara's (1980, p. 1) *Naiskarmya-Siddhi.*
19. Respectively named after *Bhāmati* the title of Vacaspati Miśra's commentary on Sankara's commentary of Badarayana's aphorisms, and *Vivarana,* the title of Prakasatman's elucidation of Padmapada's commentary on the same work of Sankara. For a discussion of the differences in the doctrines of these schools, see T. M. P. Mahadevan (1985).
20. In his essay "Jñanadeva tu kaivalyam," S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (1941/1961) has presented an interesting discussion of the debate over the issue of "knowledge only" as a means of release.
21. So named after *Vivarana,* the title of Prakasatman's commentary on Padmapada's *Pañcapadika* itself a commentary on Sankara's Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya.
22. In his Commentary on Madhusudana Sarasvati's *Siddhantabindu,* V. S. Abhyankar (1928/1962, p. 129) specifically uses the term *saksatkara* in this context.
23. Sometimes the most fundamental doctrine of the Vedanta is said to be encapsulated in four *maha vakyas* or "great sentences." Vidyaranya's *Pañcadaśi* (1982, Ch. 5) identifies them to be the

following four aphorisms derived from various texts of traditions associated with the four branches of the Veda (Rg-, Yajur-, Sama-, and Atharva-Veda): "prajñanam brahma" (Airareya Upanisad, 3.3); "aham brahmasmi" *(Brhadaranyaka* Upanisad, 1.4.10); "tattvamasi" (Chandogya Upanisad, 6.8.7); and "ayamatma brahma" *(Brhadaranyaka* Upanisad, 4.4.5).

24. nanu prasamkhyanam nama tattvamasyadi sabdarthanvayavyatireka yuktivisayabuddhyamredanam I (Suresvara 1980, *Naiskarmya-siddhi,* 3.90, p. 160).
25. Jñanottama's words in his commentary called Candrika are: viparirtabhavanalaksana pratibandhanirasenaiva upayogannididhyasanasyal (see Suresvara, 1980, p. 160).
26. This is a translation by RamaPrasada (1912, p. 180) of Vyasa's commentary on Patañjali's aphorism 3.2. The Sanskrit words of the aphorism are: "tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam," and those of Vyasa's commentary are: "tasmindese dhyeyalambanasya pratyayasyaikatanata sadrsah pravahah pratyayantarenaparamrsto dhyanam."
27. jñatrjñeyajñanasunyamanantam nrivikalpakam I (Sankara, 1921, verse 241).
28. Herbert Spiegelberg (1975) has captured the emphasis in Husserlian phenomenology on actually performing procedures such as phenomenological reduction by choosing the title *"Doing* phenomenology" for one of his books.
29. In his commentary on Patañjali's (1978) Yoga aphorism 3.6, Vyasa said "yogo yogena jñatavyo," which may be correctly paraphrased to mean that Yoga can be understood only by *doing* yoga.
30. See note 1, Chapter 3, this volume.
31. The three basic sources of the doctrines of Vedhta are the Upanisads, the *Bhagavad-Gita,* and Badarayana's Vedanta aphorisms. The three together are called the *prasthanatrayi.*

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5

SELF-AS-ENJOYER-SUFFERER

The Psychology of Affect

In the daily use of the English language, the words *feeling, emotion,* and *affect* are often used interchangeably. The *Webster's Tenth New Collegiate Dictionary* assigns them overlapping but different meanings. It defines emotion as "a psychic and physical reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling and physiologically involving changes that prepare the body for immediate vigorous action." In contrast, *affect* is defined as "the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes." The word *feeling* has many different connotations including: sensation experienced through the sense of touch, as well as "the undifferentiated background of one's awareness considered apart from any identifiable sensation, perception, or thought." Of these terms, contemporary psychology uses *emotion* most often. This is in keeping with the emphasis placed on observable aspects of emotions, namely physiological changes and bodily movements. Although subjective aspects of feelings and emotions are not completely neglected, only a minority of contemporary psychologists seem to focus on them. The term *affect,* which clearly focuses on the subjective aspect of emotions apart from bodily changes, has not been the central topic of study in modem psychology.

In India, emotions and the attendant physiological changes and physical movements were the focus of Bharata's theory of dramatics (ca. 200 BCE-200 CE). This makes sense insofar as Bharata's work was addressed primarily to dramatists and actors for whom the visible expression of emotion is obviously critical. It is in this context that the concept of emotion *(bhāva)* was studied in great detail. However, Bharata's commentators, such as Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta, started to look at the experience of the dramatic art from the spectators' vantage point. As such, their focus shifted from the expressive aspect of emotion to its *experience.* Many of Bharata's medieval commentators were also well versed in Sāṅkhya Yoga, Vedānta, Kashmir Shaivism, and other such systems of philosophy and spiritual self-development. Their interest in the broader philosophical issues

and their spiritual concerns led them to the examination of the nature of pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering, and their relationship with the attainment of the highest good in human life.

In the European tradition, too, the study of emotion has a long history that reaches back to the ancient Greeks. Both Plato. and Aristotle were deeply concerned with the nature of happiness and its relationship with ethics. In *Nichomuchean Ethics,* Aristotle proposes *eudaemonism,* a thesis that affirms happiness as the chief goal of human life. Over the millenia, several major thinkers have made important contributions to the study of affect: several of the Stoic philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, Darwin, James, Dewey, Ryle, Heidegger, and Sartre, to name just a few prominent ones (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984). In psychology, emotion has continued to be an active area of research, regardless of its relative neglect during the heyday of behaviorism. In the intellectual history of India, too, various aspects of affective life have been a matter of great interest throughout the centuries, There are, however, major differences between the persistent themes that have dominated the Western, as compared with the Indian, approaches to emotion.

In the history of Western thought, emotions often have been viewed as sharply different from, and in conflict with, reason. While some thinkers like Hume have thought that "[r]eason is, and ought only to be the slave of passions" (Hume, 1739/1978, p. 415), others like Kant have sought to subordinate passion to reason. By and large, however, in the Western tradition, reason has been generally considered in positive terms, while emotions are often painted with a dark brush. During Europe's Age of Enlightenment in particular, reason was believed to contribute to impartiality, truth, enlightenment, moral judgment, harmony, and so on, but passions were considered to be irrational, leading to sinfulness, and to have a disorganizing and detrimental effect on human behavior. In the Indian tradition, emotions such as lust and anger have been occasionally viewed as ruinous (e.g., *Bhagavad-Gītā,* 1948/1973, 2.61–63; 3.37-43), but they are not consistently vilified, nor is reason glorified, as in the West. While the modern Western studies of emotion have been conducted in a predominantly secular, scientific, and biomedical context, the most prominent Indian contributions to the study of emotion have come from dramaturgical and esthetic theories, which have found a central place in the theory and practice of religious devotion.

Another point of divergence is that while Indian approaches to the affective aspect of life often have focused on the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer, such a focus is uncommon is Western approaches. Indeed, the Sanskrit word *bhoktā,* which means the "feeler" of emotions, so to speak, or the "one who enjoys and suffers," is virtually untranslatable in English. The same is true about the related term *bhoga,* which has several connotations, such as experiencing pleasure or pain, savoring or relishing, sexual enjoyment, and so on. It is derived from the root *bhuj,* meaning to

eat, drink, or consume; to enjoy a meal; to experience a reward or undergo punishment; and also to suffer. The lack of English equivalents to the Sanskrit terms *bhoga* and *bhokta* and their cognates in several Indian languages suggests some basic difference in cultural perspectives on the experience of affect. As such, these terms deserve some explanation here.

First, it is important to note here that the verb *bhuj* combines both enjoyment and suffering. Thus, it covers the entire spectrum of emotions along a single continuum extending from the greatest happiness to the worst suffering. Second, the term *bhoktā* recognizes the self as the *single* subject who experiences all kinds of emotions, pleasant or unpleasant, throughout the life cycle- and even across a series of life cycles. The self in this sense is the "experiencer," meaning enjoyer as well as sufferer, the one to whom life presents itself as a kaleidoscope of experiences colored with innumerable shades of affect. Third, in legal terms, the owner of a property is its *bhoktā* whose right it is to enjoy it as he or she pleases. By the same token, the person is also the *bhoktā* of the responsibilities (taxes?) and misfortunes (theft?) that might accrue as a result of the ownership. The concept of *bhokta* pithily conveys the basic idea behind the Law of Karma, namely, the thesis that the agent must inevitably suffer consequences of bad actions, just as he or she claims the rewards for good actions. Fourth, the conceptual collocation of the positive and negative polarities of affect opens the door for the conception of an experience that is qualitatively different from both pleasure and pain, happiness or suffering. The Sanskrit word *ānanda* is used to designate this "positive" experience beyond pleasure and pain. The usual English translation of *ānanda* is bliss, meaning complete happiness, but this is an approximation at best. Finally, careful examination of the nature of the one who enjoys and suffers is the most crucial feature of Indian approaches to affect. As we shall see later in this chapter, various schools of Indian thought suggest different conceptions of the nature of the self as enjoyer–sufferer, with matching methods to overcome suffering.

Given these sharp contrasts, it is more difficult to converge Indian and Western approaches to emotion than those to cognition and action. Moreover, the diversity of approaches to emotion within the Western context alone makes it difficult to put them together into a common conceptual framework, making it even more difficult to make meaningful comparisons across cultures. Against this background, I shall be selective and include only those aspects of Indian and Western approaches to emotion that lend themselves to a relatively more meaningful juxtaposition. For want of a deeper and more comprehensive metatheoretical framework than the various theories, I shall occasionally point out ontological, epistemic, and axiological principles to help illustrate pertinent points of contrast and similarity. After sketching a selective overview of relevant aspects of certain Western approaches, I shall move on to a few distinctive Indian perspectives on the relationship between the self and affect.

Western Psychological Views of Emotion

In his *Republic,* Plato (1941) presents his view of the tripartite psyche, where each part is the seat of a different principle: reason, spirit, and appetite. In his model, appetitive psyche is clearly the seat of emotions. Plato assigns appetite the lowest position in a hierarchical arrangement of the three parts. He considers appetite to be "irrational," and often pits it against the rational part of the psyche placed at the top of the hierarchy (see Plato's *Republic,* 1941, Chapter 13). According to Plato, the conflict among the three parts of the psyche causes disharmony, which he very nearly equates with evil. He considers harmony to be the hallmark of health and well-being- and even of truth, goodness, and beauty- and harmony is considered attainable only through the exercise of reason. Plato's negative views of human appetite and pleasure seeking have become a pervasive and persistent aspect of the Hellenic legacy. These views are matched by an equally negative view of passion in the Christian legacy as represented by St. Augustine (although he did not share the Hellenic glorification of reason). From the Augustinian point of view, passion is bad not so much because it sways us from truth and causes inner disharmony as Plato suggested, but because it leads to *sin.* In the East, by and large, the negativity of pleasure seeking follows not so much from its alleged contributions to sinfulness, but from the insatiable nature of desire and from the consequent suffering.

Modem psychology shares this Western legacy in various ways. In contemporary psychology, barring few exceptions, emotion continues to be viewed as a generally negative influence on cognition. In the Freudian model, the id, the pleasure-seeking part of the tripartite psyche, is perpetually involved in conflict with the thinking and conscious ego as well as the conscientious superego. The Freudian model of the tripartite psyche bears an uncanny similarity with Plato's model, although the id, ego, and the superego are not exactly parallel to Plato's appetitive, spirited, and rational parts of the psyche. Freud was perhaps as obsessed with the importance of pleasure seeking as was St. Augustine, although their views of the role of religion in this context were diametrically opposed. While for St. Augustine passions lead humanity to sin and religion to salvation, for Freud (1930/1961) religion is the primary cause of the repression of passion and of the resulting discontent of modem civilization.

Another persistent theme of the Western tradition is the division between soul and the body and the view that body is the seat of passions. This soul–body dualism may be traced back to its Hellenic roots in the ideas of Pythagoras, and also to the Christian tradition from St. Augustine to Descartes. In ancient Greece, Plato (1941, p. 305) viewed the psyche as closer to truth and reality than the body. By contrast, Aristotle avoided sharply dividing the mind from the body by suggesting that beliefs, bodily motions, and physiological changes are inseparable components of emotion.' For Descartes, who sharply separated the soul from the

body, passions posed a special problem. On the one hand, he thought that passions clearly involve agitation of the body, and yet on the other hand, they seem to be inseparable from purely mental phenomena such as perceptions, desires, and beliefs. This Cartesian dilemma continues to plague contemporary Western approaches to emotion. At one end of the psychophysicalist divide, Carl Hempel (1935/1949) takes a strictly physicalist position and insists that statements of mental events such as "I have a toothache" are meaningful only to the extent to which they are reducible to (or translated as) statements of publicly observable bodily conditions such as decayed tissue in the tooth. At the other end of the spectrum, Jean-Paul Sartre (1939/1984, p. 246) insists that emotion is ineluctably a *fact of consciousness*. Sartre gives a simple example to illustrate his point. A person may feel that the grapes up on the vine are highly appetizing, but, on finding them hard to reach, may decide that they are "too green." In such a situation, Sartre suggests, the sour taste of the grapes is not conferred chemically, but by "acting disgusted."[2]

Parallel to the differences in the views of emotions as physical versus mental events is the distinction between objective versus subjective approaches to emotion. While the objective aspects of emotion, such as bodily changes, are open to objective observation and physicochemical intervention, the subjective aspects are open only to verbal description, interpretive analysis, and to communicative intervention. The physicalist and mentalist views of emotion are thus paralleled by the matchingly different empirical and hermeneutic epistemologies. In the West, the physicalist view of emotions was buttressed by the naturalistic perspective advanced by Charles Darwin and his followers, among others.

The Naturalistic Approaches to Emotion

It is widely- almost universally- accepted that humans are like many other species of animals in their emotional reactions to the sight of food, members of the opposite sex, danger, sudden changes in the environment, and so on. Charles Darwin provided a solid theoretical framework for the comparison of emotional expression of humans and other animals. A few years after publishing the *Origin of Species,* Darwin (1872/1965) published *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals.* In it he gave a detailed and systematic account of the similarities between human and animal expressions of emotion and provided a natural scientific explanation of human emotions in that context. His main point was that several aspects of the expressions of emotion, such as the showing of teeth in anger, have functional value in the adaptation and survival of animals. Although grinding one's teeth in anger may not have survival value among humans any more, such expressions may be understood as a vestige of the evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens.* By providing a biological account of emotional expression, Darwin pioneered the natural science approach to the study of emotions.

In his attempt to present a natural science approach to psychology, William James (1884, 1890/1983) proposed a psychophysiological account of emotions. While emphasizing the role of physiological factors such as increased rate of breathing or heartbeat and other visceral changes, James suggested that such changes precede, rather than succeed, the conscious awareness of an exciting fact, such as the sight of an attacking animal. To put it in his oft-quoted words, "we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike" (1890/1983, p. 1066), and not vice versa. James's view, often known as the James–Lange theory (after its cocontributers), emphasizes the primacy of bodily changes over the experience or cognition of emotion both in chronological order as well as in relative importance. Within decades after James's pioneering work, the physiologist Walter Cannon (1915/1929) tried to show that visceral organs do not play a crucial role in emotions, as suggested by James. In his experiments, cats showed typical reactions of anger and fear even after their visceral organs such as the heart, lungs, stomach, liver, and others were surgically removed. Cannon held that the seat of emotion was the central nervous system, especially the hypothalamus, and not the visceral organs. Regardless of this shift in the locus, Cannon's theory, like James's, hinges on the bodily reactions built into the physiological makeup of organisms that are triggered by stimuli to which the organisms have been sensitized during the course of evolution.

Over the past few decades, the naturalistic approach has been advanced in the form of various allied perspectives within the natural science paradigm: psychoevolutionary (Plutchik, 1970, 1977), electrophysiological (Delgado, 1973), neuroendocrinal (Henry, 1986), and so on. Numerous studies have tried to specify the physiological, chemical, or electrical correlates of various emotions, and several surveys of such studies have been available in specialty books (e.g., Leshner, 1977) and textbooks (e.g., Carlson & Hatfield, 1992, Ch. 4) on emotion. Recently, Carl Ratner (1989) reviewed and critiqued the naturalistic theories of emotion. As noted by him, and rightly so in my opinion, the naturalistic approaches generally stress the universality of emotional reactions within and across species; assume the primacy of emotion over cognition; and try to reduce at least the naturally given and widely shared "basic" emotions to specific neurophysiological or chemical conditions. These features of the naturalistic approach militate against the claims to cross-cultural variation in the experience of emotion and of cognitive control over emotions claimed by cultural and cognitive constructionist theories of emotion.

Here, as in many controversial issues, the truth may lie in the middle. On the one hand, it makes sense to agree with the naturalists in at least one respect: that we must recognize that there is a standard neurophysiological infrastructure that provides all humans with the basic capacities essential for experiencing emotions. On the other hand, the naturalists' assumption that each basic emotion involves a specific chemical or neuroelectrical condition is not supported by studies. For

instance, on the basis of his survey of a large number of studies, Leshner (1977) concludes that "James's position that discrete physiological states evoke discrete emotions is not supported" (p. 121). Schacter and Singer's (1962) classic studies are instructive in this instance. They injected their experimental subjects with specific amounts of epinephrine, a chemical known to induce palpitation, tremor, face flushing, and other such physiological conditions commonly observed in emotional arousal. Schacter and Singer then exposed their subjects to differing experimental conditions: a confederate acting silly in the "euphoria" condition versus a confederate complaining about having to write embarrassing questionnaires in the "anger" condition. They found that subjects reported their feelings of "joy" or "fury" appropriate to the *context* to which they were exposed. Although Schacter and Singer's research has been criticized strongly on both methodological and theoretical grounds (Plutchik & Ax, 1967; Maslach, 1979), nevertheless it has shown that social and cognitive factors play a key role in the subjective experience of emotion regardless of common underlying physical conditions.

The relative importance of physiological conditions versus cognitive factors is an issue of continuing debate. Without trying to foreclose that debate, some observations may be made at this juncture. As noted by Ratner (1989), although biology provides the "potentiating substratum for emotions" (p. 227), "nothing in our nature tells us *that* we will, *when* we will, or *how* we will experience these emotions" (p. 226; emphasis added). He suggests that "[i]n becoming uncoupled from natural stimuli and responses and in becoming associated with socially specified stimuli and responses … the natural basis of infantile 'emotions' is jettisoned and an entirely new basis is constituted" (p. 226). As we shall see, the Indian estheticists also have noted an "uncoupling" of human emotions from their natural bodily correlates, although their views are based on entirely different premises and have radically different outcomes. Also, the constructivist views of emotion are more compatible with the cognitivist implications of Vedanta, which makes it particularly relevant to discuss them here. I shall conclude the discussion of naturalistic approaches to emotion on this note, and turn to the cognitive constructivist and cultural constructionist approaches to emotion.

The Cognitive, Social, and Cultural Construction of Emotions

The relationship between cognition and affect has been a matter of continuing debate over the past several years. On one side of this debate, Robert Zajonc (1980, 1984) insists that cognition and emotion are two different domains, and that the latter has primacy over the former. Prominent on the other side of the debate is Richard Lazarus (1984), who claims the primacy of cognition over emotion. To me such a debate seems singularly sterile and counterproductive, regardless of whether primacy of either is claimed in terms of their relative importance, causal efficacy, or temporal precedence. In my view, cognition, affect, and conation are

convenient fictions that help make sense of the complex construct of personhood, rather than separate "real" entities or ontological categories. The trilogy of mind may be seen as three complementary aspects in terms of which constructs such as "mind" and "personhood" are understood. Like the three "strands" *(guṇas)* of *Prakṛti* or the phenomenal world as conceptualized in the Sankhya system, they may be viewed as continually "interacting" in the sense that in situations where one seems to dominate the others typically recede, but none is completely eliminated or totally absent at any time. It is interesting that, regardless of their differences over the primacy of either affect or cognition, both Zajonc and Lazarus imply that both are present in human experience and behavior at all times. For instance, following Inhelder and Piaget, Zajonc (1980) says that "[w]hile feeling and thoughts both involve energy and information, the first class of experiences is heavier on energy, whereas the second is heavier on information" (p. 154). This may be translated in Sāṅkhya terms to mean that *sattva guṇa* predominates in cognition while the *rajas* predominates in emotion. Lazarus (1991) speaks in the same vein when he approvingly refers to John Gerson, a medieval writer, who reportedly argued that "there is no cognition that is not also affection, and no affection that does not include cognition; both are interdependent and operate together" (p. 130).

Given the constant and inevitable overlap between cognition and emotion, it is hardly a surprise that several contemporary authors provide cognitive formulations of emotion. Lazarus (1991, p. 129) lists over 20 of them. Of these, Arnold (1960), Averill (1980), de Sousa (1980), and Mandler (1984) may be mentioned as prominent ones. Here, I wish to refer to selected ideas of Averill insofar as he explicitly provides a cognitive constructivist and social constructionist view of emotion, which would help connect with the constructionist theme stressed elsewhere in this volume. Averill (1980) explains his constructionist view of emotion, as follows:

> First, it means that the emotions are social *constructions,* not biological givens. Second, it means that the emotions are *improvisations,* based on an individual's interpretation of the situation.... [T]he emotions are viewed here as transitory social roles, or socially constituted syndromes. The social norms that help constitute these syndromes are represented psychologically as cognitive structures or schemata. These structures — like the grammar of a language- provide the basis for appraisal of stimuli, the organization of responses, and the monitoring of behavior, that is, for the improvisation of emotional roles. (p. 306; emphasis original)

It is important to note here that according to this view, emotions are neither simply a physicochemical condition or a state of activation of the body, nor are they sets of sensory feelings "given in experience." They are mainly construals, meanings, or interpretations that are "added by the mind." Although guided by the cognitive structures and schemata lodged somewhere within the psychological makeup of the person, they are also inextricably embedded in the social context. Averill

(1980) explains that by "syndrome" he means "a set of responses that covary in a *systematic fashion*" (p. 307; emphasis added). I assume that in emphasizing systematic covariation of responses Averill suggests that emotions are part of an organization in the society at large where the role relationships are structured, and also within the individual where cognition, affect, and conation are structured. As suggested by Averill in the above quotation, the specific contribution of cognition to emotional experience is the *appraisal* of the social stimuli and responses in the light of social norms appropriate to the situation on hand.

Here, I wish to emphasize that to me it makes good sense to place emotions in the context of social roles as Averill does. Most social roles are structured in pairs: parent–child, husband–wife, master–servant, teacher–student, ruler–citizen, local–stranger, and so on. It is in the *mutuality* of such paired relationships that most of the rights and duties of persons are defined. Rights and duties of persons vis-à-vis alter roles, as well as the broader social norms that ostensibly govern a person's conduct in various situations, differ from culture to culture and within each culture from time to time. Feelings such as guilt, envy, jealousy, pride, and love are invariably shaped by the specific socioculturally defined nature of interpersonal role relationships. Against this background, Theodore Sarbin (1986), a prominent role theorist, has suggested a theory of emotion based on the concept of social roles.

Insofar as they are an integral part of the sociocultural domain, emotions are bound to be relative to culture and era. Although as a biological species humans share standardized capabilities to feel pleasure, fear, attraction, repulsion, disgust, and so on, all such "basic" emotions are nevertheless open to be differently molded within the contexts of intercultural as well as interindividual differences. The derived or "social" emotions such as shame and guilt, or "interpersonal" emotions such as envy and jealousy are particularly open to differential shaping in relation to individual and cultural variation. It should be clear that a young man may be less inhibited in the company of his friends in feeling randy and in expressing such feelings openly than he would be in the company of his parents or superiors. The social norms of a stag party are obviously different from those of a family or church, and the emotional experience and expression must differ accordingly. Then again such norms differ from culture to culture, from one religious group to another. Compare, for instance, the expression of love in art in fresco paintings in a medieval Benedictine abbey to that in the Hindu temples of Khajuraho famous for its erotic sculptures. Or consider the different ways in which divine love may manifest within the same religion: think, for instance, of divine love in viewing God as a stem disciplining father, or in viewing Jesus as an adorable baby born in a manger. In certain sects of devotional Hinduism, divine love is expressed in many varied forms by placing Lord Kysna in all conceivable role relationships. We shall turn to this issue in a later section of this chapter.

Thinking of emotion in this manner in the cultural context is radically

different from the conception of emotion in the context of experimental psychology. In Woodworth and Schlosberg's (1954) *Experimental Psychology,* emotion is viewed primarily as a pattern of physiological arousal studied objectively in decontextualized experimental laboratory situations. The implicit ontology of this model is physicalist; its epistemology is operationistic; and its implicit praxis is the prediction and control of animal and human behavior. Compare against this background the following characterization of emotion by Michelle Rosaldo (1984), an anthropologist: "Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by stories that we enact and tell. They are structured by our forms of understanding" (p. 143). Rosaldo's epistemology is clearly hermeneutic and interpretivist, shaped as it is by authors such as Paul Ricoeur (1970) and Clifford Geertz (1973), who have taken the "interpretive turn" in the philosophy of the social sciences. It is within this pluralist interpretive context- as opposed to the context of positivist universalism- that *ethnotheories* of emotion sensitive to cultural differences are constructed. Catherine Lutz (1987), another anthropologist working within the interpretive framework, put it this way: "Ethnotheories of emotion describe a fundamental and ubiquitous aspect of psycho-social functioning. They are used to explain why, when, and how emotion occurs, and they are embedded in more general theories of the person, internal processes, and social life" (p. 291).

Rom Harré (1986), who strongly advocates a social constructionist view of emotions, rejects the Cartesian ontology, and suggests that emotions occur in the conversational reality. The rules of language in "emotion talk" are considered important in understanding emotions. Harré and Gillett (1994) note that "Indo-Europeans seem to have no place for the emotion the Japanese call 'amae,' with a display of which an adult Japanese expresses a kind of child-like emotional dependency that we would treat as a mark of immaturity" (p. 147). The conversational context is placed within an *interpersonal space,* as it were, so emotions need not be located within either the mind or the body. In such formulations, dialogue between persons is often considered the "primary reality," and is thereby granted ontic status. Later on in this chapter, we shall see how in the tradition of devotional religion in India, divine love is thought of as a primary reality, and the feeling of love is construed and ways for its transformation devised within the framework of distinctive ontological doctrines and cultural ideals. Here, let me turn to Max Scheler, who locates emotion in deeper levels of the ego, rather than out in the socially shared interpersonal space.

Max Scheler's Doctrine of the Deeper Levels of Feeling

Max Scheler (1874–1928) was a prominent German philosopher who made important contributions to the study of emotion as well as to phenomenology, sociology of knowledge, and other related fields of study. Although well recog-

nized among philosophers, his contributions to the study of emotion have been largely ignored by Anglo-American psychologists. His ideas deserve special attention in the present work for a variety of reasons: He is one of the rare thinkers who (1) developed his views of emotion in the light of a serious comparative study of Indian and Western thought; (2) focused on the affective aspect of human life as a whole with a particular emphasis on human suffering; (3) systematically examined the relationship between emotions and the ego; and (4) emphasized the role of cognitive appraisal in the experience of emotion with particular reference to religious and spiritual meaning and values. A central theme in Scheler's theory of emotion is the classification of emotions in four levels of the "depth" of personality (Scheler, 1926/1973; 1916/1974).[3] The following is a schematic presentation of Scheler's levels of feelings adapted from Ted Altar (n.d.) (see Table 5.1).

According to Scheler, the first, *sensory* types of feelings are located in specific parts of the body; one knows where the pain is, and what organs of the body it belongs to, and how far it extends. Such feelings are not attached to the ego immediately as are the psychic feelings like sadness and happiness. They are attached to my body, rather than to me, as it were. They do not extend in time; there is no "prefeeling" in anticipation or "postfeeling" that would linger before or after the experience of sensory feelings. Nor are such feelings shared with fellow beings. Sensible feelings are producible by the application of adequate stimuli and are removable by the use of narcotics.

By contrast to the localized sensory feelings, the *vital* feelings such as feeling refreshed, vigorous, or sick, and so on spread vaguely throughout the whole body, and are felt at the body's "particular life center" as it were. According to Scheler, the vital feelings regulate life meaningfully, they have a functional and intentional character, and are disturbed by paying attention to them. Next, he describes the *psychic* feelings as immediately self-relating; they are about some object or other (such as one's home, friends, events) and are related to cognitively perceived values. They belong to the "psychic ego" (presumably as opposed to the bodily

TABLE 5.1
Scheler's Four Types of Feelings Graded by Increased "Depth" of Feeling

Type of feeling	Examples	Objects of Value
1. Sensory feelings	Pain, tickling, itching, sensual pleasures	Pleasant/unpleasant
2. Vital feelings	Weakness, strength, illness, health, sleepiness, etc.	Noble/base
3. Psychic feelings	Sorrow, joy, sadness, happiness, euphoria, etc.	Just/unjust. beautiful/ugly
4. Spiritual feelings	Blissfulness, despair, peace of mind, etc.	Personal worth. pangs of conscience

ego), and as such are thought of as the "pure feelings of the ego." Unlike sensory pain that may disappear or vital feelings that may be disturbed when one pays attention to them, psychic pain tends to grow when attended to. In Scheler's view, it makes sense to say that at times the psychic feelings are felt to be close to or at a greater distance from the ego. Thus, one could say "I *am* sad," thereby expressing sadness closer to the ego than in saying "I *feel* sad."

Scheler places the purely *spiritual, metaphysical,* or *religious* feelings such as happiness, despair, security, pangs of conscience, peace, and the like at the deepest level. They relate to the person as an indivisible whole. According to Scheler, bliss and despair are the correlates of the moral values; they are religious feelings par excellence. They are not subject to arbitrary change; they are unconditioned and unalterable by any acts of will. Nor are they related to special areas of a person's existence, such as his or her society, friends, vocation, and the like. They permeate the entire range of experience and correlate with the moral value of our personal being.

Scheler's approach clearly implies the mind–body distinction; while the first two levels can be easily assigned to the lived experience of the embodied person, the next two can be placed in the psychic, social/conversational, and/or spiritual domains. Insofar as Scheler connects emotions to values, he implies the importance of the role of appraisal within a sociomoral context. In that respect, his approach resembles the cognitive and social constructionist theories of emotion. It stands out as remarkably different from any other commonly known modem Western approach to emotion in emphasizing the role of affect in the "inner" reaches of the ego, and in suggesting a domain of affect beyond intentional states of the mind. As we shall soon see, it is in this regard that Scheler's ideas make a connection with the Indian approaches.

Scheler says little about the removal of human suffering; he does not propose any techniques to help cope with the negative side of emotions. Yet he makes some broad comparisons between typical Western and Indian ways of trying to eliminate suffering. Western ways, Scheler notes, involve eliminating from the world the *external* causes of suffering by such means as technology, hygiene, therapy, organization of the community, and so on. By contrast, the Indian–Buddhist approach, he observes, aims at eliminating such *internal sources* of suffering as the drives and the thirst that reside within the soul (Scheler 1916/1974, p. 145). Scheler asks if the main feature of the Buddhist approach might be thought to be "the *withdrawing of self* from the causal connection of act and existence" (p. 148). Insofar as the Buddha denied the existence of the self, Scheler's conjecture about the nature of the Buddhist technique for the elimination of suffering is somewhat off the mark. Nevertheless, I think he is right in characterizing typical Indian approaches as involving a withdrawal from the external world into the innermost sanctum of the mind. This is at least true of the practice of Yoga, which the Buddha had incorporated in his Eightfold Path. This brings us to the system of Sankhya-

Yoga and its technique of "isolating" the self-as-enjoyer–suffererfrom the daily involvement in the affairs of the external world.

The Self as Enjoyer-Sufferer: The Views of Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta

The concern for suffering in human life and the search for ways for its remedy have been central themes ofthe Indian culture for millennia. These themes parallel the concern for sinfulness ofhuman nature and the striving for redemption that are central to Christianity. The first of the four noble truths of Buddhism is that suffering exists, and another is that suffering originates in self-centered desire. The main objective of Buddhism, then, is to overcome desire and thereby remove suffering. Similarly, the complete annihilation ofsuffering is the central goal ofthe Sāṅkhya system, which is one ofthe oldest systems ofIndian thought. Its concepts are traced to pre-Buddhist Upaniṣads such as the *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad. The twin systems of Sāṅkhya and Yoga on the one hand and the various schools of Buddhism on the other are believed to have developed through mutual influence for centuries before the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies were systematized in sets ofaphorisms probably around the first couple centuries ofthe Christian era. Except for the materialist Cārvākas, most systems of Indian thought share the view that human suffering results from the insatiable nature ofhuman desires. This view has deeply shaped typical Indian theories ofthe affective aspect ofhuman life regardless of differences among them on various matters. Buddhism, for instance, has always denied the existence of the self, while the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedanta systems have conceived of a Self *(puruṣa, ātman)* that lies beyond pleasure and pain. Yet they all share the assumption ofthe insatiability ofdesires. It is therefore necessary to examine the notion of the insatiability of desires before examining the Sāṅkhya, Yogic, and Vedāntic views of self and affect.

The Insatiability of Desires and the Resultant Suffering

As noted in Chapter 3, the Vedantists share the view ofthe human condition widely held in India that, on the whole, the amount ofsuffering in life exceeds that of pleasures. The 17th-century saint–poet Tukārām expressed the idea in a single pithy line: "Upon searching one finds but a grain ofhappiness, and alas, there's a mountain ofsuffering."[4] The negativity ofthis assessment resembles the lament of Job in the *Old Testament,* who loses his property, family, and health for apparently no sin on his part: the amount of suffering in life far exceeds that of happiness. However, unlike in the case ofJob in the Bible, the predominant issue in the Indian context is not whether humans suffer disproportionately when compared with their wrongdoing and whether God is fair and just in distributing happiness and misery,

but rather, the negative assessment of the balance sheet is based on the specific idea that human expectations always exceed the levels of actual gain, no matter how great the gain or success might be. Throughout the centuries, this idea has been conveyed more often in a tacit way through poems, myths, legends, and so on, than explicitly through theoretical analysis and argument.

The story of King Yayāti in the epic Mahābhārata poignantly illustrates the idea of the insatiability of human desires. Yayāti's desires could not be satisfied despite the help of enormous power, abundant wealth, and beautiful women. Cursed by a man whose wife he desires, Yayāti attained old age too soon, losing his ability to enjoy life. As a result, he begged his grown sons to lend him their youth, so that he would continue enjoying. Obliged by his youngest son, Yayāti continued his pleasure seeking for a long time, but still could not feel contented. Like the billionaire Howard Hughes of our own times, he could not find happiness despite the wealth and the best comforts and beauties that wealth and power could buy. So persistent is the theme of the insatiability of human desires in the Indian culture that the story of Yayati has inspired novelists to recycle the theme in contemporary literature. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that a "Yayāti Complex" is as central a feature of the Indian civilization as Freud thought the Oedipus complex was for the whole of humanity. The central idea of the story of Yayati is beautifully expressed in words attributed to him in a single short stanza of *Ādiparva* (75.49), a section of the epic Mahabharata It may be paraphrased in English as follows: "Human desires can never be completely sated by means of objects of pleasure; instead they get stronger like fire flared by fuel." The same idea is repeated in the same words in the *Manu Smṛti* (2.94), an influential code of Hindu ethics (see Manu, 1886/1971, p. 47).

In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* B. G. Tilak (1915/1971) has discussed the idea of the insatiability of desires while comparing typical Indian ideas of happiness and misery with parallel notions in Western thought. While explaining the significance of the story of Yayāti and the theme it represents, Tilak refers to an idea attributed to Schopenhauer, namely that a person is happy to the degree to which his or her expectations are fulfilled. Tilak expresses this idea mathematically as a fraction obtained by dividing the quantity of enjoyment by that of expectations. He adds that the result of this division must always be a fraction of diminishing value, because expectations always tend to grow faster than actual gains. As Tilak points out, there are modem Western parallels to such old Indian ideas. Note, for instance, that William James expressed a similar idea about two decades before Tilak penned his formula. According to James (1890/1983, p. 296), a person's self-esteem may be computed by the formula:

$$\text{Self-esteem} = (\text{Success} \div \text{Pretensions})$$

The same general idea has been followed up in various ways in more recent times. For instance, in their famous studies of the American soldiers in the second World War, S. A. Stouffer and his associates (1949) found that the level of satisfaction

among soldiers did not depend so much on their actual gains (e.g., salary, benefits, promotions, working conditions, etc.), as it did on who they compared themselves with and how. Soldiers in various units often compared themselves with groups who, in their eyes, were doing better, and as a result even the most well-paid ones felt dissatisfied with their conditions. Stouffer coined the term relative deprivation to describe this phenomenon. The concept of *relative deprivation* has since been developed into a theory with broad applications in the fields of personality and social psychology (Runciman, 1966).

The concept of relative deprivation implies that whether we *feel* satisfied or dissatisfied depends on our *appraisal* of our own conditions vis-à-vis persons or groups (often called reference groups) with whom we choose to compare ourselves. A parallel theme in social psychology is presented in Leon Festinger's (1954) theory of *social comparison processes*. A common observation in this connection is that people often choose the context of comparison that makes them "feel good" in comparison, so to speak. Yet, paradoxically, the theory of relative deprivation suggests that the opposite is also true in certain conditions. The common Indian take on this paradox is that it is possible to compare "down" as well as "up" on common scales of comparison, but more often than not we tend to compare with those up the ladder. Thus, a person who has no house to live in looks at the one who lives in a hut, who in turn compares him- or herself with the owner of a mansion, the mansion owner wants a bigger and better mansion, or ten or a thousand of them, and so on.

There is an old Indian legend that when Alexander the Great conquered the Punjab province of India, he thought that he had conquered the whole world, and wept for there was no more land left to conquer. Then there is another story that having heard that some great sage lived in the mountains, Alexander ordered his men to go bring the sage to him. Since the sage refused to come, the emperor went to him instead. Exultant in his triumph and glory, Alexander offered to give the sage whatever he wished for. The sage asked for nothing except for the emperor to move away, so that the sage could continue basking in the sun. The fact that the same story is told with a Greek cynic replacing an Indian yogi should not distract us from the point of the story. The point is that such legends convey the value of attaining an inner source of contentment that makes little of the greatest worldly gains.

It is of course possible to criticize this idea by saying that it represents a "sour grapes" attitude toward worldly pleasures and glory. Alternatively, the putative value of the so-called inner contentment might be thought of as "sweet lemons." It is often said that the pitiable economic conditions of contemporary India are the result of an attitude of disdain for worldly glory fostered over centuries by various schools of thought and religious sects. Yet it is also noted, paradoxically, that Hinduism is probably the only religion that flagrantly encourages the worship of the Goddess of Wealth *(Lakṣmī)* and flaunts erotic sculpture in temples. Also, a Hindu apologist might point out that one of the traditional

definitions of *dharma* (sometimes loosely translated as "religion") is "that which helps attain both, worldly prosperity *(abhyadaya)* as well as ultimate good beyond prosperity *(niḥśreyasa).*"[5] It may also be noted that although the ancient Vedic tradition, particularly the Mīmāmsā school, has emphasized the pursuit of pleasures in the "other world" (*svarga*, or heaven), many other schools have suggested ways of annihilating suffering here and now, not in a possible future world. Indeed, the disdain for otherworldly pleasures is cultivated in the early Upaniṣads. A story from the ancient *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad, narrated in Chapter 2 of this volume, illustrates this point.

Naciketas, it may be recalled, was not satisfied with the promise of all kinds of pleasures on earth and in heaven because they were *impermanent.* The point of the story is that neither pleasures nor suffering last forever; they follow one another in endless cycles as surely as economic upturns and downturns. Similarly, birth follows death, and the cycle of *saṁsāra* perpetuates, with the balance sheet running more in the red than black. It is believed that what keeps the cycle going endlessly is the inevitability of the consequences of action, or karma, whereby no one can escape enjoying or suffering as appropriate. The individual, as an enjoyer-sufferer, is sometimes viewed as a hapless rider tied willy-nilly to a vehicle made of accumulated seeds of past karma that keeps hurtling from past to present to future (Dasgupta, 19244973, p. 103). This view of the world stands in sharp contrast with the Western ideal of *progress,* which is often believed to be perpetual and always moving from good to better within the mundane sphere (Bury, 19321 1960). At the cosmological level, the idea of progress is complemented by the notion of time's arrow: the notion that time, like evolution, inevitably moves only from the past to the present to the future (Blum, 1962). At the social level, the counterpart of the idea of progress is to think in terms of utopias. At the individual level, its counterpart is the notion of self-actualization. While Aristotle may be identified as the originator of the concept of self-actualization, implying perpetual progress of the individual, Maslow (1954/1970a) is one of its prominent advocates in contemporary psychology. In the Indian tradition, by contrast, time is viewed as cyclical (Deshpande, 1979). Society is also said to move in cycles, each cycle going into four stages of worsening decay. At the individual level, life is seen as going through a perpetual cycle of birth and death in which suffering exceeds happiness. Nevertheless, the saving grace of such an apparently pessimistic view is that a *permanent* end to suffering is envisaged. The Sāṅkhya is clearly a system that puts the permanent annihilation of suffering as its central goal. That is the system to which we now turn.

The Sāṅkhya View of Suffering and Its Permanent Removal

The *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* is a book of aphorisms composed by Īśvarakṛṣṇa to summarize the principles of the Sāṅkhya system that were passed on to him from

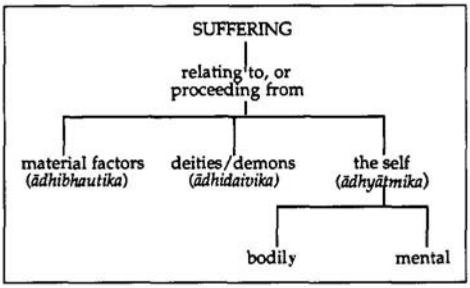

FIGURE 5.1. The Sāṅkhya view of the three types of suffering.

its originator, Kapila, through a succession of teachers and students.[6] This text begins with a statement to the effect that, insofar as there exists threefold suffering, there is desire to know the means for counteracting it. Figure 5.1 schematically represents the Sankhya conception of the three types of suffering. The first type involves suffering arising from external physical factors, such as other humans, animals, reptiles, and the like. According to Vācaspati Miśra,[7] one of the chief commentators of the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā,* the pain caused by attacking persons, animals, or reptiles can be removed by physical means, such as scaring them by raising a stick, or by counterattacking, and so on. The second type of suffering *(ādhidaivika)* arises from a different type of external factors, such as demons or deities. Such suffering may be averted by wearing amulets or chanting mantras to ward off the demons, or by offering sacrifices to the deities and praying to the gods. We shall ignore here the reference to demons and the shamanist practices to counter them, since it sounds repugnant in the light of the worldview of science, and shall look at the idea of praying to the gods. It appears that prayers to the gods are mentioned simply because it was common among people to use them; in principle, prayers would be irrelevant to the Sāṅkhya system because, unlike the followers of theistic Mīmāṁsā system, they neither believed in gods nor aspired to seek a place in the heaven. From the Sāṅkhya viewpoint, even if prayers were effective, a place in the heaven would be temporary, and hence useless in view of the system's avowed goal of eliminating suffering once and for all. Like Naciketas in the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad mentioned before, the Sāṅkhyas sought a radical and permanent solution to the problem of suffering, and they claim to have found one. The idea of the permanent eradication of suffering would sound quixotic to Western ears, but it would be interesting to examine what it means.

As mentioned above, Scheler had noted that the Buddhist way of dealing with suffering was by altering conditions internal to the person, not by controlling nature or other such external means, which are emphasized in the West. Indeed, the Sankhya system does not aim at killing attacking animals or exorcising haunting demons as a means of eradicating suffering. Its focus is on dealing with suffering of

the third category named above, namely that "pertaining to the self." In his commentary on the Sāṅkhya aphorisms, Vācaspati Miśra clarifies that the suffering "pertaining to the self" arises from two types of *internal* sources: one from the body and the other from the mind. Of these, bodily pain is believed to result from factors such as the imbalance of bodily humors, and could be alleviated by ingesting medicine. By the time Īśvarakṛṣṇa composed the Sāṅkhya aphorisms, Āyurveda, India's indigenous medical system, was already well established. In fact, it even included therapy for psychological problems (Weiss, 1977). But the mental suffering that the Sāṅkhyas sought to remedy was neither of the psycho-pathological variety, nor of the garden variety, such as that arising from affective reactions like hunger and lust. Instead, their focus was on suffering arising from misconstrued notions of selfhood that are congenital among all mortals, but are removable through the right insight. To understand what that means, it is necessary to look at the basic concepts of the Sāṅkhya system and examine some relevant aspects of their worldview.

The Sāṅkhya system postulates two distinct ontological categories: *Puruṣa,* which is pure consciousness, and *Prakṛti* which Larson and Bhattacharya (1987, p. 23) have called "primordial materiality." Although conceived as a single category, the term *puruṣa* refers collectively to innumerable distinct centers of awareness, or individual "souls." The fundamental characteristic of *puruṣa* is sentience, or the capacity for experiencing objects and events. In and of themselves, the *puruṣas* do not act; they are passive witnesses to what goes on in the domain of Prakṛti The very purpose of Prakrti is said to be to become the object of experience or "enjoyment" *(bhoga)* for the *puruṣas* and thereby bind them within its domain, and to release *(apavarga)* them from its bonds so that they can remain in the state of "isolation" *(kaivalya).* As noted in Chapter 3, Prakrti is said to be composed of three continually interacting components or "strands" *(guṇas),* namely *sattva* (intelligibility, "enlightenment," or lightness), *rajas* (activity, energy), and *tamas* (inertia, resistance, and darkness). By their very nature, these strands continually supercede one another; one dominates while the others recede, thereby accounting for the constant changes in the domain of mind and matter.

How and why the phenomenal world of Prakṛti keeps changing, or why the passively witnessing *puruṣas* got involved with events in the changing world in the first place, are knotty issues in Sāṅkhya theory (Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 247). It is believed that the normally incessant changes in the domain of Prakrti are temporarily arrested during the cosmic phase of dissolution *(pralaya).* During this quiescent phase, there is a corresponding cessation of experience of all individual *puruṣas.* But this phase ends in its course, and a new phase of evolution is said to begin. According the Sāṅkhya cosmogony, the first evolute of the contact between *puruṣa* and Prakrti is called mahat, or "intellect" *(buddhi).* This, in turn, gives rise first to egoity *(ahaṁkāra)* in the purusas, which manifests in a persistent tendency toward self-preservation and self-assertion of individual beings. From egoity evolves mentation *(manus,* or mind), which in turn generates the sensory and

motor organs encased in a body. Such is the account of origination of the embodied existence of personhood according to the Sāṅkhya theory. In this state of embodiment, a person is said to be endowed with four pairs of mutually opposing predispositions leading to either merit or demerit, knowledge or ignorance, attachment or detachment, power or impotence.[8]

It should be clear that the Sāṅkhya system conceives of persons as endowed with powers to choose between right and wrong, action and inaction. There is no doubt whatsoever that the basic subject matter of Sāṅkhya is persons as ethically responsible beings. Moreover, in Sāṅkhya, as in Yoga, the events in the universe are assumed to strictly follow the laws of cause and effect and conservation of energy (see Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, pp. 254–255). It is implicit that individuals are "free" to go on either side of the predispositions: right versus wrong, attachment versus detachment. But once the choice is made, the appropriate consequences must follow. Strict lawfulness is supposed to apply in the moral domain as well as the nonmoral; merit and demerit necessarily follow from right or wrong action, respectively. Responsibility for action is assumed to be built in into the cosmic order. By the same token, the three components or "strands" of Prakpi, which are ingrained in all psychophysical phenomena, interact in a strictly lawful fashion. There are distinct affective qualities associated with the three strands *(guṇas)*. When the *sattva* predominates, one feels pleasure; sorrow and depression are experienced when *rajas* and *tamas* are predominant, respectively.

As conceptualized in the Sāṅkhya system, feelings are an integral and indivisible aspect of the three components of Prakṛti, which accounts for psychophysical existence of human beings. Although the Sāṅkhya system distinguishes between suffering at the physical and mental levels, there is neither a dichotomous division between mind and body, nor a problem of interaction between them. As noted by Dasgupta (1922/1975), "Feelings are .., the things-in-themselves, the ultimate substances of which consciousness and gross matter are made up.... [In] Sāṅkhya analysis,... thought and matter are but two different modifications of certain subtle substances ..." (Vol. 1, p. 243). The implication of this view for theorizing about emotions should be clear. From the Sāṅkhya viewpoint, there is no need to quarrel over the role of physical or bodily activation versus mental or cognitive components of emotional experience. Each strand of Praktṛi contributes to the experience and behavior of the person; cognition, affect, and conation result from the combined *interactive* functioning of the three strands. This conception of the interaction and mutual convertibility of the three strands of Praktṛi sharply contrasts with the dichotomous conception of mind and body, which creates the problem of interactionism. Moreover, unlike in the Cartesian scheme where the self, mind, and consciousness are equated in the conception of "l'ame" (soul), in Sāṅkhya, as in Yoga, mental events such as thinking, imagining, and remembering are considered modifications of the "inner instrument" *(antaḥkaraṇa)* composed of the intellect, the ego, and the mind, and not of purusa, the true Self.

According to Sāṅkhya, *puruṣa* mistakenly identifies itself with the conditions

of the inner instrument, and considers itself happy, sad, depressed, and so on depending on the conditions of the three strands of which the mind and body are composed. As long as that mistaken identification continues, one rides the roller coaster of affect, feeling happy for some time and sorry or depressed later on, and back again, in endless cycles. It is possible, however, for the individual to use the inherent capacity for knowledge or correct discrimination, and to realize that true selfhood involves being the uninvolved witness, as *puruṣa* is in its nascent state. When this insight dawns, *puruṣa* returns to its nascent condition beyond the ever-changing domain of Praktṛi, never again to return to the sorrowful experience of mundane life.

This implies that the end of suffering involves going beyond both pleasure and pain, elation and depression. Such is the ideal state of the "isolation" *(kaivalyu),* according to Sāṅkhya. What happens to the person who attains this state? According to *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* (aphorism 67), untouched by sorrow, the person continues to live through the remaining days of the course of the life cycle just as a potter's wheel continues to turn for some time after the goal of making a pot is accomplished. But when the person dies, there is no return once again to the cycle of birth and death; the individual has attained release from *saṁsāra,* the wheel of life and death.

If someone appreciates this Sāṅkhya worldview and wishes to attain its ideal, how should one proceed? The *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* (64) very briefly suggests that one should study the [right] principles, dispel all erroneous notions about selfhood, and rid oneself of egoism. In his commentary on this aphorism, Vācaspati Misra explains that what one should get rid of is the notion that I am the one who knows this or *does* that. To put it in the language of Greenwald (1980) mentioned in the previous chapter, one must give up "beneffectance," i.e., the tendency to take credit for success, avoid blame for one's failures, and insist that what I know must be right. This is more easily said than done, and the primary sources of Sāṅkhya do not provide a more elaborate guideline of how to proceed. In this regard, the Yoga system of Patañjali complements the Sāṅkhya system by providing a guideline for the step-by-step application of its principles.

Patañjali's Yoga: On "Isolating" the Self

Patañjali's Yoga is widely recognized as the theistic Sāṅkhya since it builds on the conceptual framework without changing anything except for the addition of the concept of Īśvara or "God." Despite its recognition of God, the theism of Yoga hardly prompts worship and other forms of expression of affect as does the theology of Rūpa Gosvami and others who will be considered later in this chapter. After all, the God of Patañjali's Yoga (1.24) is not viewed in a personal form, but rather as a special *puruṣa* who is untouched by "afflicted" forms of karma, i.e., by actions that are tainted by emotional involvement *(rāga, dveṣa)* that bind him to the

unending chain of actions and their consequences. At any rate, the relevance of Yoga for this chapter is threefold. First, Yoga, like Sāṅkhya conceives of the Self *(puruṣa)* in terms of a transcendent state that lies beyond pain and pleasure, which makes it relevant to the topic on hand, namely the connection between self and affect. Second, although neither Yoga nor Sāṅkhya provide an elaborate account of various emotions, they nevertheless focus on the affective aspect of life while aiming at the individuals' release from suffering. As I hope to clarify in greater detail in the remainder of this section, the overall strategy of both Sāṅkhya and Yoga is to focus not on the objects of desire, but on the subject who desires them. Third, Yoga explicitly recommends that one should withdraw attention from external objects, systematically dilute the affective bond that ties the self to various objects, and draw attention increasingly inward till one reaches the *puruṣa* at the center of awareness. Let me explain what I mean.

It is important to note at the outset that Patañjali (1.12) clearly identifies two principal means to the Yogic goal of the "isolation" *(kaivalya)* of the Self *(puruṣa)* from its entanglement in the World *(Prakṛti):* first, relentless effort *(abhyāsa),* and second, nonattachment *(vairāgya).* It is my impression that many writings on Yoga do not adequately emphasize the role of detachment in the attainment of this goal. The Sanskrit term *vairāgya* means indifference to worldly objects as opposed to love or hatred for them. To put it in the terminology of Western psychology, what the cultivation of detachment means is the dilution of the *affective* bond that joins the self to objects in the world. What is at stake is the relationship of the person with everything that is loved in self-love, as William James (1890/1983, pp. 302-307) put it. That includes all kinds of things in the physical, social, and psychological domain that *"have the power to produce in a stream of consciousness excitement of a certain peculiar sort"* (p. 304; italics original). In psychoanalytic terminology, the Yogic idea of detachment may be translated as decathexis insofar as cathexis implies the investment of *affect* or libidinal energy on objects. In the terminology of the self psychology of Kohut (1971) and others, detachment requires major realignment of the self with "selfobjects," i.e., with persons who are so important to us (such as parents, caregivers, closest friends) in providing emotional stability that they almost become parts of ourselves.

In his famous paper on the self, C. H. Cooley (1902/1968) said: "I do not mean that the feeling aspect of the self is necessarily more important than any other, but that it is the immediate and decisive sign and proof of what the 'I' is; there is no appeal from it..." (p. 87). I think it is in the same spirit that the Yoga system views love and hate *(rāga, dveṣa)* as the immediate products of the ego *(asmitā)* born from the unwitting association of self-as-subject (See-er, or *draṣṭā* with seeing and other proceeses of the mind. Cooley goes on to say that "the feeling itself does not go unaltered" (p. 87), and James (1890/1983) declares that everything that is included in self-love is relatively "transient, liable to be taken up or dropped at will" (p. 307). In my view, the method of self-transformation recommended by

Patañjali's Yoga includes a variety of specific measures to systematically and willfully weaken one's affective ties with the world around. Note, for instance, the various restraints listed in the very first steps in the eight steps to Yoga recommended by Patañjali (see Table 5.2). They require that a person wishing to pursue the path of Yoga refrain from causing injury to anyone and from theft, lust, and avarice. All this means that one learns not to hate anyone or anything and not to yearn for anything. This does not mean necessarily that one must "drop out" from society altogether in order to be able to practice Yoga. It means, nevertheless, that one must learn to be affectively neutral.

Learning to abstain from likable things and activities is certainly not unique to Yoga; monastic practices in all kinds of religious and spiritual disciplines recommend or require abstinence. Moreover, refraining from pleasurable objects and activities at least for some time is useful- even required- in all kinds of pursuits, whether educational, commercial, or military. Consider, for instance, the student, the merchant, or soldier, who must forgo weekend parties and outings in order to pass a test, complete a sale, or win a battle. Moreover, affective neutrality is recommended even for a scientist. The Yogic discipline, however, goes much further than that. It requires the adept to withdraw attention from all intentional objects, loved or hated, strongly or even mildly, and turn inward, focusing attention on its contents. In spirit, this maneuver is similar to St. Augustine's call to look inside the soul where, he claimed, lies the truth. The Yogic strategy follows this inward direction, and asks its followers to reach right down to the very center of awareness. Moreover, according to Yoga, as with Sāṅkhya, what lies at the center is not the center of volition, as Erikson would conceive of it, or a knower or thinker as Kant and James, respectively, thought it; it is, rather, the changeless, purely sentient Self *(puruṣa)*. According to Kapila's Sāṅkhya aphorisms (6.6–10), the Self is untouched by pain as well as pleasure (see Garbe, 1884A987, pp. 270-272). According to Patañjali's Yoga, one emancipates oneself from the recurrent cycles of pleasure and pain when one withdraws attention fully from the world of

Table 5.2
The Eight Steps to Yoga Recommended by Patañjali

1. Restraints *(yama):* abstaining from injury, falsehood, theft, lust, and avarice
2. Observances *(niyama):* cleanliness, contentment, self-control, study, devotion
3. Posture *(āsana):* stable and comfortable
4. Breathing exercises *(prāṇāyāma):* help stabilize the mind
5. Withdrawal of the senses from their objects *(pratyāhāra):* "introspection"
6. Concentration *(dhārāna):* pegging the mind to an object
7. Contemplation *(dhyāna):* slowing and "homogenizing" thoughts
8. "Altered states of consciousness" *(samādhi):* a series of "altered states"

objects as well as one's ongoing thoughts and discovers the Self as the center of awareness.

THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC VIEW OF THE BLISSFUL ĀTMAN

There is an interesting similarity between the increasingly deeper levels of emotion suggested by Scheler and the successive inner layers of personhood or jiva as described in the Advaita Vedantic model (compare Table 5.1 earlier in this chapter with Fig. 3.1 in Chapter 3). The sensory feelings in Scheler's model belong to the outer or bodily layer of the *jīva,* and the vital feelings to the second inner layer of "vital breath" and other bodily functions. The psychic feelings of the third layer in Scheler's model correspond with the "mental" and "cognitive" layers, which are third and fourth layers of the *jīva* respectively. Further, there is an uncanny resemblance between Scheler and Advaita Vedāntic models in that both place the blissfulness in the deepest layers. But unlike with Scheler, who places blissfulness as well as despair on the same fourth level, the blissfulness of the Atman described in Advaita Vedānta is not on a par with despair, but at a still "deeper" level close to the center of awareness. Whether Scheler and Advaita Vedāntists count four levels or five is of course not important; theorists are free to construct models with an arbitrarily chosen number of layers. What is important is that Scheler and Advaita Vedānta assign different meaning to terms such as blissfulness. For Scheler, bliss seems to mean a highly affective state placed at the positive pole of the continuum, while suffering is placed at the opposite pole. By contrast, the Advaita Vedāntic term *ānanda,* which is usually translated as bliss, suggests a highly valued experience without implying a positive affect as opposed to a negative one. In Advaita Vedanta, the goal is to reach out to a zone beyond the dialectics of pleasure versus pain, happiness versus suffering.

In Sāṅkhya and Yoga, the end of suffering is said to occur when a person withdraws attention from the object pole of intentional consciousness into the subject pole and experiences a nonintentional state of consciousness. Advaita Vedānta is like Sāṅkhya Yoga in accepting the bipolarity of the ordinary states of consciousness and in aiming to withdraw attention from the object pole to the subject pole. However, there is some difference between the Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedantic views of the self and of self-realization. While both Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedanta claim the Self to be beyond pleasure and pain, the Advaita Vedāntists view it as blissful in nature. However, in the *Sāṅkhya Sūtra* (5.66), Kapila says that the Upaniṣadic account of blissfulness *(ānanda)* is merely figurative (see Garbe, 1884/1987). The cessation of pain in self-realization is nevertheless highly valued in Sāṅkhya, since in ordinary experience pleasure is believed to be tinged by previous, concomitant, or later pain. It may be recalled that, as noted in Chapter 2, the Upaniṣads describe the blissfulness of the Ātman–Brahman as 100 quintillion times higher than the highest joy of a well-endowed human being. Yet Sāṅkhya, a

rigorous nondualist, is known to downplay such glowing accounts of the hallowed state, since the Self is understood to be completely beyond pleasure and pain; it cannot be characterized in either positive or negative terms.

Regardless of such differences, the Sānkhya Yoga, as well as Advaita Vedāntic systems, consider the ego *(asmitā, ahamkāra)* rather than the Self to be the seat of pleasure and pain. The Advaita Vedāntic system equates the enjoyer–sufferer with the self-as-knower and self-as-agent. The basic argument is that it is only the ego equipped with cognitive capacities that can *know* the difference between pleasure and pain and *do* something to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, are all matters of cognitive construction, and so is the ego, which is usually mistaken for the true Self. As noted in the previous chapter, if one performs meditation as prescribed by Advaita Vedānta, the ego is cognitively deconstructed. When it is realized that the true Self is *not* the creature that believed itself to be a knower and agent, there is no one left to do something, know whether the results are good or bad, and thereby feel pleasure or pain. So, according to Advaita Vedānta, a successful program of meditation dissolves the ego, and thus transcends both pleasure and pain.

As noted recently by Sudhir Kakar (1991, p. 7), Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836-1886), the famous saint of Calcutta, often used to repeat the metaphor of the salt doll immersed in the Ocean to convey the notion of the dissolution of the ego. Kakar suggests that Ramakrishna's biographer Romain Rolland described the experience following the dissolution of the ego as the "oceanic feeling" for its lack of perceptible limits. Kakar also suggests that Freud picked up this expression from Rolland's letter to him. At any rate, some critics of this Advaitic notion of the "dissolution of the ego" find the result rather unattractive. What is the point in getting dissolved into an insipid condition that takes away pleasure along with pain and suffering? Several Indian thinkers who prefer the path of devotion over the Advaita Vedantists' path of knowledge take a radically different approach to the conceptualization of the nature of emotion. Not only do they turn to the dramaturgical model, which inquired deeply into the causes of emotions, but they also aim at the perpetuation of a sense of selfhood so as to become immersed in the blissful love for God. In the remainder of the chapter, I wish to discuss first the dramaturgical approach to the study of emotion and the path of devotion, which constructs a theory of self and affect based on the dramatical model.

Emotion According to the Dramaturgical and Aesthetic Theories of India

In the Indian tradition, major contributions to the study of emotion came from aesthetics. What makes it particularly relevant to psychology is the discussion of various "causes" of emotion as portrayed in drama. Another common theme that

allows meaningful comparison of Indian thought with modem psychology is an issue they faced in common, namely, the controlling of emotions, either to minimize their negative impact or to maximize their positive contribution to life. The following discussion emphasizes these points in selectively summarizing the relevant aspects of the vast literature on Indian and comparative dramatics and aesthetics.

Emotion and the Experience of Art

A systematic analysis of the nature of emotion is found in an ancient Sanskrit text, *Nātyaśāstra,* meaning the science of dramatics. It was composed by Bharata (often called Bharatamuni) sometime between 5th century before the beginning of the Common Era and the first two centuries after it. This work is widely known through an important commentary, the *Abhinavabhāratī* by Abhinvagupta (ca. 990–1020)(see Bharatamuni, 1926/1956). The central concept in this approach is *rasa,* which means "aesthetic relish," or the relishable quality inherent in a work of art. In India, as in the West, it has been commonly assumed that every work of art- a play, dance, novel, or a poem- communicates a distinctive emotional flavor or mood, such as the erotic, comic, tragic, and so on (Chari 1990). Bharata suggests a list of eight major aesthetic moods or *rasas* and names eight common human emotions or *bhāvas* to which they correspond.[9] The two lists are given in Table 5.3. The eight emotions mentioned in Table 5.3 are considered major in the sense that, in comparison to other emotions such as envy or shame, these are believed to occur, like the "fundamental" emotions mentioned earlier, in all humans as well as animals. In the traditional Indian approaches, it is generally believed that they tend to appear repeatedly, last longer, and dominate the "minor" emotions if they were to appear in experience at the same time.

Table 5.3
The Eight Aesthetic Moods and Corresponding Durable Emotions According to Bharata

Major aesthetic moods *(rasas)*	Major (durable) emotions *(bhāvas)*
Love *(śṛṅgāra)*	Erotic feeling *(rati)*
The comic *(hāsya)*	Mirth *(hāsa)*
Pathos *(karuṇa)*	Sorrow *(śoka)*
The furious *(raudra)*	Anger *(krodha)*
The heroic *(vīra)*	Energy/mastery *(utsāha)*
Horror *(bhayānaka)*	Fear *(bhaya)*
The odious *(bībhatsa)*	Disgust *(jugupsā)*
The marvelous *(adbhuta)*	Astonishment *(vismaya)*

In addition to the eight major emotions, Bharata accounts for 33 minor or relatively transient *(vyabhicāri)* emotions: repose or withdrawal *(nirveda),* debility or weakness *(glāni),* doubt or apprehensiveness *(śaṅkā),* jealousy *(asūyā),* intoxication or pride *(mada),* weariness (srama), indolence *(ālasya),* depression *(dainya),* anxiety *(cintā),* infatuation *(moha),* recollecting or turning things over in the mind *(smrti),* contentment *(dhrti),* shame *(vrīdā),* impulsiveness *(capalatā),* joy *(harsa),* agitation *(āvega),* stupor *(jaḍatā),* pride or arrogance *(garva),* despair *(visāda),* eagerness *(autsukya),* drowsiness *(nidrā),* convulsions *(apasmāra),* sleepiness *(supta),* awakening *(vibodha),* indignation *(amarsa),* dissimulation or hiding under false appearance *(avahittha),* ferocity *(ugratā),* thoughtfulness *(mati),* sickness *(vyādhi),* insanity *(unmāda),* the "dying" experience *(maraṇa),* fright *(trāsa),* and hesitation *(vitarka).*[10]

A cursory look at these lists would indicate that Bharata tried to be systematic, analytical, and comprehensive in his approach, in a manner similar to the spirit of science. We may not agree with Bharata on how many emotions there are, or which of them are "basic," or which ones may be considered major or minor, and on what grounds. But then, modern psychologists do not tend to agree on such issues either. As a recent textbook of the psychology of emotions (Carlson & Hatfield, 1992, pp. 12–13) points out, the behaviorist J. B. Watson (1924/1970) thought of three basic (i.e., nuclear, inborn) emotions, namely fear, rage, and love (pp. 152–155);Paul Ekman (1980) contends that there are six, namely happiness, disgust, surprise, sadness, anger, and fear (p. 138); and Robert Plutchik (1980) lists eight "primary" emotions: joy, sadness, anticipation, surprise, anger, fear, acceptance, and disgust (p. 134). It is clear that despite lack of unanimity among them, there is a significant overlap between Bharata's account with these recent accounts.

Some of the items on Bharata's longer list would seem odd to us; one would be at a loss to understand why, for instance, sickness or insanity should be called an "emotion." The apparent oddity of some of the ancient labels stems from the difficulties in translation. Nevertheless, given the centuries and continents that separate Bharata from contemporary Western psychologists, the degree of overlap in their accounts of at least the basic emotions is remarkable. It is common among modem psychologists to characterize some emotions as relatively more important than others by designating the former as "elementary," "primary," "basic," or "fundamental." A parallel distinction made by Bharata was based on the assumption that the more fundamental emotions were lasting *(sthāyi),* unlike others considered to be relatively short-lived or transitory emotions *(vyabhicāri bhāva).* Bharata's writings do not present any quantitative data, but the fact that he used a quantifiable criterion like durability as a primary criterion of importance indicates his inclination toward precision.

As an analyst of drama, Bharata thought that only the durable emotions could be effectively translated into aesthetic moods. The transitory emotions can only be accessories that help embellish the central aesthetic mood of a drama; he believed

that no effective work of art could be based on jealousy, shame, or anxiety or other "transitory" emotions as its central theme. In a long tradition of scholars who commented on, critiqued, and enriched Bharata's analysis through their own contributions, other reasons were suggested for making a distinction between the stable and transitory emotions. Abhinavagupta's commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭya-śāstra* (which was mentioned earlier) follows an earlier (9th century) commentator called Bhatta Lollata in suggesting that the stable emotions arise from basic "drives" *(vāsanā)* that manifest in all humans as well as animals. It is noted, for instance, that in humans as well as in animals, erotic feelings are aroused by a variety of sexual stimuli, and that fear is caused by the sight of ferocious predatory animals. Many Indian approaches to emotion are similar to modem psychology in recognizing the basically animal nature of human beings, but differ in emphasizing the distinctly human features: cognitive, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual.

The Causes and Expression of Emotion

The concept of *vāsanā* alludes to what we may call a "biological" explanation. It is important to remember that Bharata's primary interest was in the analysis of drama. In the rich tradition inspired by him, the focus has been primarily on analyzing the nature of aesthetic experience and on instructing playwrights and actors. As such, there was no emphasis on identifying causes, as in scientific studies. Nevertheless, Bharata discusses the causes of emotions to help explain how to effectively portray emotions in a dramatic production. He points out, for instance, that a dramatist can effectively portray the aesthetic mood of love by showing the presence of an objective cause *(ālambana-vibhāva)* of erotic feelings, such as a member of the opposite sex (Romeo for Juliet, and vice versa), as well as contributing or exciting causes *(uddipana-vibhava),* such as privacy, quiet, a gardenlike setting, a crescent moon in the sky. While the situation created on the stage is thus suggestive of objective and contributing causes, the actions of the actors represent the overt or externally observable expressions of emotions *(anu-bāva):* ogling and looking meaningfully at each other, signs of blushing on the young woman's face, the couple's postures and movements toward each other, soft tone of their speech, and so on. In addition, the characters might express certain ancillary emotions through their appropriate external manifestations: bashfulness expressed by unsuccessful attempts to hide overt signs of arousal, feeling of joy expressed in appropriate words, movements and postures, and so on.

In the seventh chapter of his *Nāṭyaśāstra,* Bharata provides a detailed account of the objective and contributing causes as well as overt expressions *(anu-bhāvas)* of each of the durable as well as transitory emotions in his list. He distinguishes three types of expressions: verbal, physical (shrugs, glances, knitting the eyebrows and the like), and physiological. The third, physiological type of expressions (called *sāttvika bhāvas)* are in turn divided into the following eight

categories: stiffness the body, perspiration, bristling of hairs on the head or other parts of the body, voice-breaking, trembling, changing skin color, shedding tears, and fainting. Bharata is careful in noting that visible expressions of emotion are partly determined by human nature *(loka svabhāva saṁsiddha)* and partly guided by social customs *(lokayātrānugāmin).* He suggests that acting on the stage is and should be guided by our understanding of both human nature and social customs. To help get a sense of Bharata's analysis, let us examine his account of one of the emotions: Shame, he suggests, is caused by doing things that are considered inappropriate, such as disobeying elders, transgression of normal expectations, or nonfulfillment of one's promise. It should be expressed by hiding one's face, looking down rather than facing up, drawing lines or doodling, playing with one's ring or dress, biting nails, and the like. Actors and dancers in India continue to be guided by Bharata's instructions to this day.

The Relationship Between the Experience of Emotion and Its Physical Correlates

A skilled actor can often use the proper intonation, physical movements, and gestures to correctly portray intended emotions. Could an actor also reproduce at will physiological reactions like shedding tears in expressing grief or having gooseflesh while portraying fright? Yes, says Abhinavagupta provided the actors concentrate fully and become one with the feeling that they are supposed to be experiencing at a given time. This implies the assumption that many physiological processes can be voluntarily induced through concentration, which in turn implies the mind's ability to control the body. The idea that body and mind can be controlled through concentration is central to the psychological principles outlined by Patañjali's Yoga. Several medieval commentators of Bharata, such as Abhinavagupta, explicitly followed the Sāṅkhya Yoga system of philosophy and psychology. Thus, Abhinavagupta characterizes emotions clearly as primarily mental states *(citta vṛttis)* using Yogic terminology. As noted, the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems do not make a dichotomous division between mind and body in a Cartesian fashion. Instead, mental and physical events are seen in a continuum involving the mutual interaction of the three "strands" of Prakrti mentioned earlier. Thus, Abhinavagupta considers the feelings of weariness, drowsiness, or stupor as predominantly physical states with a small amount of mental component without having to consider them *either* mental *or* physical.

Is there a necessary relationship between a given type of emotion and specific physical and physiological states? The *rasa* theorists deny a one-to-one relationship between mental and physical states on two different grounds. First, as a general principle, they explicitly recognize that, although particular conditions are commonly known to result from particular causes, in some instances the same conditions result from other causes as well. Second, in relation to emotion, they

note that the same physical and physiological responses often accompany different types of emotions. For instance, one's body might move away because of either fear or disgust, and one might shed tears of joy as well as sorrow. This observation is consistent with Walter Cannon's (19191929, p. 351) claim that the same visceral changes occur in very different emotional states and in nonemotional states, and Schacter and Singer's (1962) observation (noted earlier) that experimental subjects injected with identical chemicals perceive their states differently in differing situations.

Regardless of the loose relationship between cause and effect in relation to emotion, understanding of the common causes of various emotions is considered important for dramatics. Indeed, in drama, there are no real emotions resulting from real causes. Śaṅkuka (9th century), one of the important commentators of Bharata's work, notes the artificiality of the dramatic situation. Obviously, an actor playing a lovelorn Duṣyanta, or a Romeo, is not in fact smitten by the actress who plays his paramour, nor does he actually experience the emotion he tries to portray. Even if the actress playing Juliet were so good that her cheek actually turn pink on stage, most spectators are aware that such signs of love are just as fake as the crescent moon appearing in the background. But they infer that Romeo and Juliet must have experienced love since they know the conditions under which such feelings are ordinarily obtained. *Rasa* theorists were well aware of the importance of inference in the experience of aesthetic feelings. Thus, according to Śaṅkuka, what matters is neither the artificiality of the dramatic situation nor that spectators infer the existence of emotions, but that a corresponding aesthetic feeling is actually experienced by the spectators.

The Generalization of Emotions in Aesthetic Experience[11]

An interesting aspect of the experience of works of art is that they convey certain emotions to innumerable persons of differing backgrounds. But whose emotions are they? At first blush it appears that in the case of a drama, it conveys the emotions of a character, mainly of the dominant mood of the hero of the play-Prince Rāma's grief upon abduction of his wife Sītā, for instance. In fact, Lollata (9th century), one of the earliest commentators of Bharata, suggested that it is the intense emotions of the main character such as Rāma that a drama conveys. These may be perceived as resulting from objective causes (missing wife), intensified by contributing factors (helplessness while in exile), expressed through overt actions (roaming everywhere in search), and further intensified by secondary emotions (guilt from being unable to protect her, etc.). This analysis by Lollaṭa invoked strong criticisms and long arguments among a chain of scholars over the centuries. The resulting controversy is highly instructive, since it throws light on the nature of aesthetic emotion, brings out some of the most distinctive features of Indian thought, and also brings out the social or interpersonal locus of emotions stressed

by contemporary social constructionist theories of emotion. As such, I shall briefly review its main arguments.

Śaṅkuka pointed out that the original character portrayed in a drama is never present on stage. So there is no question of his or her feelings as such being involved in creating an aesthetic mood. (Moreover, the feelings portrayed may be that of an animal, such as the fright of a fawn, or of a purely fictitious character.) What generates the aesthetic mood, he suggests, is the expression of feelings by an actor. The actor's actions convey an intended emotion in the same way that strokes of a paintbrush imitating the contours of a horse correctly convey the idea of a horse. A later scholar, Bhaṭṭa Tauta, criticized this view by pointing out that an actor normally does not actually have feelings that he or she tries to convey. How could a well-fed actor demonstrate the pangs of hunger if he does not feel them at the time of acting and has never felt them in his entire life? Also, it is impossible that the actor imitates the character, since in most cases, the actors have had no opportunity to meet the historical (or imaginary) characters they are playing. Further, since the feelings of the character are not directly observable by anyone, how could they be imitated by any actor? Granted that an actress can imitate the observable behaviors accompanying certain emotions that she has herself experienced or witnessed in others, these could not be an imitation of the original character, but only of some typical person (of similar sex, age, and status when compared with the character) experiencing the emotion to be portrayed. Even then, the imitation of specific behaviors could hardly convey a specific intended emotion, since specific behaviors are common to different feelings (shedding tears is common to sorrow as well as joy), and the same activities could be interpreted to mean very different behaviors. For instance, an actor drinking from a glass could be perceived as drinking milk or liquor, which has totally different meanings. In other words, according to Śaṅkuka, actors and their emotions or actions could hardly be the proper locus of aesthetic feelings conveyed to the audience.

Bhaṭṭanayaka (9th – 10th century) examined a third alternative- namely, that the locus of feeling in aesthetic experience is the spectator him - or herself and ruled against it. His line of argument was roughly as follows: Imagine a situation where a spectator is watching a tragedy, like Rāma grieving over the abduction of his wife Sītā. The spectators' experience of pathos could not be their own, for why should the loss of Sītā cause grief in their minds? Who is she to them? If one were to argue that the portrayal of a missing spouse reminds the spectator of their own spouses, this does not make sense. For the spectators might be husband and wife sitting next to each other to watch the play, which makes grieving over a missing spouse totally irrelevant or contradictory to their experience at the time of viewing. Moreover, it makes no sense to assume that spectators witnessing a tragedy experience the sorrow it evokes as their own sorrow. Why would people want to make themselves miserable- and even to *pay* for a painful experience? Yet, it is commonplace that people do not watch only comedies; tragedies seem just

as popular- and as expensive- as comedies. Spectators could hardly be expected to keep watching tragedies if they were to leave the theatre and continue to feel the tragedy as if it were their own.

The upshot of the above arguments is that aesthetic experience cannot be reasonably assumed to be the experience of either the character, or the actor, or the spectator. Then whose emotions are conveyed in drama anyway? As a way out of this dilemma, Bhaṭṭanāyaka suggested that what is shared widely in response to a work of art is not the feeling of any particular person, but rather a *generalized* feeling. According to his theory, there are two factors essential for the experience of aesthetic feelings. The first factor involves the process of generalization *(sādhāraṇīkaraṇa)* of feelings. In poetry and other audible forms of art it occurs because of the power of words to communicate primary meanings based on their established usage *(abhidhā)* and secondary meanings through metaphor and other figures of speech *(alaṁkāra)*. In visual forms of art, generalization of feelings is made possible because of the power of acting (gestures, intonation, shedding tears, and the like) and the portrayal of the common causal factors that are widely believed to lead to the basic emotions. The second factor involves the psychological process of delectation *(bhojakatva vyāpāra)* occurring in the minds of the audience or spectators. This process is comparable to the tasting of delectable food, which we tend to "chew" *(carvaṇa,* or sipping slowly as in wine tasting) while enjoying its taste. In the delectation of a work of art we "enjoy" not only love and laughter but also sorrow, fear, and even disgust, just as we enjoy the tart and bitter tastes along with the sweet while tasting a gourmet recipe.

Abhinavagupta (10th – 11th century) advanced and deepened the theory of rasa on the theoretical foundations laid down by his predecessors named above. First of all, he makes a clear distinction between the basic emotions *(bhāvas)* experienced in daily life by all of us, from the aesthetic relish *(rasas)* enjoyed while witnessing (or "chewing" and relishing) a work of art. Emotions are the experiences of particular individuals resulting from particular causes. By contrast, moods evoked by works of art are not the emotions of particular persons, as we just saw. They do not belong specifically to the author, the character, the actor, or the spectators. Moreover, they are not perceived as the emotions of a friend, or an enemy, or even a neutral third party. Shorn of all connections with particular persons, the emotion expressed in art is detached from the context of time and place, and thus is truly generalized.

The manifest artificiality of drama and other works of art is an important aid to the process of generalization. The costumes of the actor show that he or she are not their usual selves in their daily lives; artifacts such as the crown on the actor's head indicates that he is playing a king's role today. We also know that the king being portrayed on the stage is in fact dead; the person wearing a crown just could not be the king he is pretending to be. The beautiful maid who appears to respond to the king's advances is also recognized as an actress posturing to be in a romantic

mood. The garden and the crescent moon are recognized as fakes, no matter how realistic the props might be. Thus, conditions that look like causal conditions appropriate to produce romantic feelings do not produce real feelings in the spectator.

However, given the willing suspension of the artificiality on part of the spectators, the portrayal of basic emotions like fear or disgust usually evokes matching responses among normal spectators. This is because, first, the script of the play has words with evocative power that arouses appropriate meanings in the spectator's mind. Whether in the form of play, poetry, or other forms of literature, words have a symbolic power to communicate meanings. A mere description of the "causes" of emotion can convey the intended meaning in the listener/reader. Abhinavagupta was one of the pioneers who explained the capacity of signs *(vyanjaka)* such as words or gestures to convey meanings *(vyanjanā)*. This topic is part of the philosophy and psychology of language and poetics, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. We therefore turn to the second factor in Abhinavagupta's explanation of the rise of aesthetic feeling in the dramatic context. This involves the power of acting, music, lyrics, and other such aspects of a dramatic performance that further concretize and deepen the meaning conveyed by the script. To put it simply, the verbal and dramatic aspects of a performance convey a powerful meaning of a generalized emotion to the spectators.

The spectator, in turn, must be capable and ready to receive what is thus conveyed. The basic capacity to receive the emotional overtones of the drama involve the inborn drives *(vasānas̄)* that render the normal spectators sensitive to natural stimuli that commonly arouse fear, wonder, sexuality, and so on. Such inborn sensitivities can be triggered by symbolic representation of typical "causes" of basic emotions. Indeed, we may at times experience palpitation of the heart or raising of the hair by watching an actor expressing intense fright or anger. However, the explicit or implicit- but common- awareness of the artificiality of the situation makes us realize that mental and bodily reactions aroused by the play do not constitute actual emotions of our own. They are part of an experience widely shared in the audience, a generalized feeling that is not a particularized emotion of either the character, the actor, or any of the spectators. The spectator knows that the arousal of experiences resembling fear or rage do not warrant responses like running away from any danger or striking someone in retaliation. The artistic portrayal of emotions is thus nonthreatening, which makes it possible to "relish" them.

Abhinvagupta's is very specific and clear about the importance of the ability of works of art to separate emotions from their common loci, namely, the egos of particular persons at a particular time and place, leading to particular consequences, experiential or behavioral. Being tied to a specific context, the lure or threat of external factors leads to either pleasure or pain, satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the ego. Pried away from that context, the feelings involved in the aesthetic

experience are neither directly pleasurable nor threatening, and they yet strike a chord deep in the psyche of the aesthete. They are enjoyable without being either pleasurable or painful, such that even fear and disgust are "relished." The upshot of Abhinavagupta's view of aesthetic mood is very well expressed in the words of a contemporary author, Suresh Dhayagude (1981): "Rasa is nothing but an experience of the basic psychological proclivities in our nature in an ennobled and heightened form without any selfish, practical and carnal preoccupations" (p. 79).

The recognition of the power of the art experience to rise above egoistic concerns is an important aspect of some of the most dominant values of the Indian culture. Bhattanayaka cherished this character of art experience and thought of it as next in value to *ānanda,* the experience of bliss that is said to result from arduous pursuit of self-realization. The Sanskrit expression used to describe the relationship between joy of the art experience and the supreme bliss of Brahman is *brahmānanda sahodara* which literally means "born from the same womb." This expression recognizes the similarity, but not identity, between the experience of art and the bliss of Brahman. There has been much discussion in recent decades about the nature of the art experience in the context of Indian and Western theories of aesthetics (e.g., Pandey, 1959; Chaitanya, 1965; Chari, 1990), and about the place of aesthetic relish in religious ecstasy (Chaitanya, 1991) and the philosophy of religion (Plott, 1974). Here, I shall restrict the discussion to an interpretation of the *rasa* theory in the context of contemporary psychology of emotion, and then turn to its relevance for the self and self-transformation in the subsequent section.

Indian and Western Views of Emotion: Some Comparative Observations

The fact that critical Indian thinking on emotions occurred extensively in connection with the arts stands in sharp contrast with the prevailing views of emotion in Western psychology (e.g., Arnold, 1960; Calhoun & Solomon, 1984; Frijda, 1986; Izard, 1977; Lyons, 1980), which pay very little attention to aesthetic experience. It is interesting to note that in India critical study of emotion flourished for centuries within the secular domain of dramatics and poetics, although many medieval theories combined such analysis with their philosophical, spiritual, and religious interests. In the secular domain, the application of conceptual analysis was apparently aimed at the improvement of the technical quality of dramatic productions and the enhancement of the art experience. In the spiritual and religious domains, the analysis of aesthetic experience accounted for the uplifting quality of the experience of art. Such accounts were based on the capacity of the relishing of emotional experience for distancing of ego from the mundane concerns of life and the self-transformation resulting from such distancing.

The idea that the experience of art often involves the distancing of the ego from its daily concerns has been made in a clear and forceful way by the British

aestheticist, Edward Bullough (1912/1957). Psychical distance, as he calls it, is distinguished from the physical distance that separates an art object and the person appreciating it. It involves the "distance that appears to lie between our own self and its affections" (p. 94). Bullough points out that psychical distance is "obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends" (p. 96). If we cannot keep such a distance, a tragedy will simply make us feel sad, and "there would indeed be little sense in its existence" (p. 112). The similarity between Bullough's ideas and the rasa theorists' notion of the "generalization" of emotion should be obvious. The main point in the *rasa* theorists' explanation of why spectators of a tragedy do not make the sorrow their own and take it home with them, as it were, is that the sorrow experienced in the theater is a "generalized" emotion and not anybody's own. In other words, in watching a theatrical production, the presenters as well as the spectators are able to place the emotions portrayed by the actors in the public domain, rather than "inside" the boundaries of their respective egos. When experienced in the public domain, the sorrow, the fear, the disgust, and other normally unsavory emotions do not cause the same discomfort as when they are experienced as part of one's own self; instead, they become "enjoyable."

The similarities between Bullough's views of psychical distance and the concept of the generalization of emotions in the *rasa* theory are indeed remarkable, given that they appeared in such distant places and times as medieval India and 20th-century England. Contemporary Indian scholars of poetics and aesthetics (e.g., Chaitanya, 1965; Tandan, 1983) have recognized this East–West convergence of perspectives, as well as the psychological and spiritual significance of the power of art experience to distance the aesthete from his or her ego and its concerns. Contemporary psychologists, Indian and Anglo-American, have generally neglected the theoretical and practical implications of the experience of art. There are probably two reasons for this neglect. First, although a field of experimental aesthetics has flourished within the framework of scientific psychology, the strong commitment of mainstream psychology to the natural science model has resulted in its alienation from the fine and performing arts. Second, experimentalist as well as phenomenological approaches to emotion have viewed emotions generally in terms of physical correlates or cognitive appraisals located within the individual, as it were, rather than between individuals. The *rasa* theorists' approach distinctly places art experience in the public domain outside the individual.

As noted in the first section of this chapter, many contemporary social constructionists also locate emotions outside of the individual. However, to my knowledge the social constructionists have not so far turned to the study of emotion in the context of art, nor have they shown much interest in exploiting the implications of this thesis for therapeutic or other potential applications. By contrast, many rasa theorists emphasize the potential of the extraindividual location of the art experience in pulling the ego out of its individual concerns. As we

shall see in the following section, the theorists of devotion exploit this potential to devise and explain a program for self-transformation. It is common in Indian communities of artists and aesthetes to consider art, especially classical music, as a form of "meditation," although several others see the performing or listening to music as no more than entertainment.[12] Be that as it may, two medieval scholars, Jīvā Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī used the *rasa* theory in the understanding of religious devotion as a means to self-transformation.

Emotion and Self-transformation in Religious Devotion

Religion is clearly one of the taboo topics in psychology today. For William James (1902/1958), religion was not a topic to be avoided; his *Varieties of Religious Experience* is a classic that continues to be widely read. However, as 20th-century psychology became strongly committed to the natural science model, it began dissociate from religion. This does not mean that the dialogue between psychology and religion has come to an end (see Havens, 1968). The study of religion continues to attract a number of psychologists in North America, who have formed their own groups within the Canadian and American psychological associations. However, these groups are relatively small, and the psychology of religion continues to be a marginalized branch of academic psychology in North America. The ideas to be presented in the remainder of this chapter are not only about religion, but also refer to certain aspects of "theology" associated with Hinduism. The theoretical analysis is borrowed from aesthetics (namely, the *rasa* theory discussed above), an area of study that is not closely allied with contemporary psychology. As such, the gap between the predominant contemporary perspectives and those about to be discussed is quite wide.

This situation demands special effort and caution from those on either side, since deep-rooted commitments and unconscious biases could prove to be obstacles in mutual understanding. I say this because my attempts in recent times to communicate my initial observations and preliminary conclusions have drawn strong reactions from some old friends and close colleagues in psychology. Nevertheless, I cannot allow such difficulties in communication to stop me from trying to cross the gulf, for this would be like refusing to start the voyage for fear of falling off the edge of the earth, and then missing the treasures that might lie yonder. Moreover, upon due exploration, if we could discover any conceptual linkages between the hitherto alien viewpoints, then we will have taken important steps in widening our horizons. It is with a sense of optimism in this regard that I venture to discuss certain concepts from the intellectual history of devotional Hinduism in the light of some recent developments in psychology.

Since many Western readers are not likely to be familiar with aspects of the history, basic concepts, and contemporary practices of Hinduism, I shall try to

provide some background. For readers familiar with Hinduism, this would of course be old hat; they could easily skip the relevant portion and read ahead. Self-transformation that is said to result from the practice of religious devotion presumes certain theological doctrines, which I will try to explain briefly. Stating such doctrines does not imply either their acceptance or rejection,. defense or refutation on my part; they are part of the cultural context in which certain psychological processes are embedded.

Historical Background of the Bhakti Movement and its Philosophical Bases

The long-standing convention in the Indian tradition is to think of the paths of knowledge, devotion, and action *(jñāna, bhakti,* and *karma)* as three major paths to self-transformation or self-realization. The first, presented in the previous chapter, is concerned with the connection between the self and cognition, and the last, to be considered in the next chapter, is concerned with the self and conation. According to the established convention, the path of devotion is clearly concerned with emotion *(bhāva).* Against this background, it makes good sense to try to understand the nature of the "path of devotion" *(bhakti mārga)* in the light of the psychology of emotion.

The history of ideas concerning the nature of deities and forms of worship and devotion in India is long, rich, and diverse. Even a quick look at this history would make it clear that the nature of the ancient Vedic deities and the forms of their worship is in some respects substantially different from the popular deities of medieval India and the forms of devotion to them. Various philosophical accounts explaining their nature have evolved along with the various forms of worship. At least that is what one obtains if and when one takes a historical perspective; such a view might of course be rejected out of hand by those who presume a timeless character of the deities and forms of devotion. Many of the prominent deities of ancient Vedas, such as Indra, the king of the gods, were ostensibly superhuman beings out of reach for ordinary mortals. Several other Vedic deities such as Agni and Marut were presiding deities of forces of nature such as fire and wind. By comparison, Rama and Krsna are believed by many to be historic figures of the post-Vedic period; they were presumably persons of flesh and blood who lived among ordinary mortals. It is a common Hindu belief that both Rama and Kṛṣṇa were incarnations of Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the world,[13] who appeared on earth to relieve humankind from its tormentors.

Indeed, while Kṛṣṇa is considered to be the ideal human being *(puruṣottama),* Rāma is often viewed as an ideal within human limitations *(maryādā puruṣottama).* The human features of Rāma and his consort Sītā are said to be typically illustrated by a particular episode in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa:* Sītā was lured by a demon in the form of an attractive golden deer, which eluded Rāma in a chase, thereby

leading to her capture by Rāvaṇa, the evil king of Sri Lanka. Regardless of the many differences between their stories, both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa can be thought of either as the divinity come down to the human level or humanity elevated to the divine level. Either way, their characterization as human figures suggests that the gap between the human and the divine can be bridged. The psychological significance of this is that, unlike superhuman gods and goddesses or the deified natural forces of the Vedas, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are considered to be models of personhood that ordinary human beings could emulate. Moreover, the rich narratives and artistic presentations of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and other such deities as persons who lived among other humans are the key to understanding the path of devotion as a means to the devotees' self-transformation.

From the ancient Vedic phase to the medieval development of religious devotion, there has been growth in the variety of ways in which self-transformation was thought of in terms of its ends and means, theory and practice, heroes and followers. In its ancient Vedic phase, the aim of religious practice was to attain a place in the otherworldly life after death by performing daily and occasional rituals enjoined by the Vedas. The philosophical system of Mīmāṁsā developed by way of the clarification of the details regarding the performance of the rituals through the correct interpretation of the Vedic texts. It was called the path of action *(karma mārga),* since the focus was on performing actions as prescribed. Its followers were members of the upper castes who were eligible to perform the rituals, and presumably priests and scholars were their leaders. Later on, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* emphasis was shifted away from ritual action to performing worldly action without being attached to or hankering for the fruits of actions, or by surrendering the fruits to the Lord. As noted in the previous chapter and earlier in this chapter, the path of knowledge prescribed by the Advaita Vedānta and Sāṅkhya systems was also aimed at permanent release *(mukti)* from the cycle of action and consequences, birth and death. Although this path was open in principle to all upper-caste members eligible to study the Vedas (particularly the Upaniṣads), in practice it was open only to a small segment of that population who were prepared to undertake the highly demanding preparation and the still harder practice of meditation.

By sharp contrast, the path of devotion was from the beginning open for men, women, and children of all ages and castes. The main feature of this path was of course a large pantheon of personalized gods and goddesses of varied character who could appeal to men, women, and children of all types of background and character. What has now been called Hinduism has been a way of life that has allowed many forms of worship with no holds barred. Even atheism is not a problem, as the prominent place of the Sāṅkhya philosophy in Indian thought clearly testifies. Unlike the Sāṅkhyas, however, most other schools of Indian thought have been theistic.

The roots of theistic systems of India are undoubtedly in the Vedas. Having

developed through an unbroken tradition over the millennia, diverse forms of devotional religion and philosophy flourished in the medieval times, leading to what has been called the *"bhakti* movement" (Bahirat, 1981; Sharma, 1987). The different sects and schools of thought within this movement varied greatly in terms of their preferred ends and means, primary literature, the philosophical rationale, as well as their leaders and followers. For many of the non-Advaitic Vedāntists, such as the followers of Rāmānuja Madhva, Nimbārka and Vallabha, release from the cycle of karma is the primary goal, devotion is the means, and the Upaniṣads and their aphoristic summary *(Brahmasutra)* and the Gītā are the primary literature. However, with the growth of the devotional movement, the focus shifts increasingly away from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads (collectively called the śruti) to different, historically later genres of the Sanskrit literature such as the great epics, the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata (classed under the category of smṛti), the Puranas, and specific sectarian literature such as the *Pāñcarātra Saṁhita, Śakta Tantra,* and so on. Although some schools of the devotional movement, such as the one represented by the saint–poet Kabīr (15th century), focus on an abstract and qualityless god *(nirguṇa bhakti),* most other schools focus on God as concretized in the form of putatively actual and historical figures such as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa

The divinization of human characters also narrows the gap between the mundane and the concrete on the one side and the ideal and the abstract on the other. In my view, the great potential of the path of devotion for self-transformation resides in such closure of the gap; the deity seems at once lodged far away in the unattainable realm of lofty ideals and magical powers, yet at the same time it is placed close at hand in a human form. This feat of closing the gap is accomplished by the richness of the great Indian epics and the *Purāṇas,* a genre of writings considered "mythology" from the Western viewpoint. Unlike the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, access to the Puraṇas is not restricted by the caste bar. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads were cloistered within the confines of demanding and rigorous rules of Sanskrit grammar; unraveling their meaning required the knowledge of the rules of logic spelled out by the Nyāya system. Their niceties were shrouded in the complicated arguments and controversies among the various schools of Upaniṣadic and Buddhist thought. By sharp contrast, the epics were made accessible in many Indian languages; the stones in the epics and the Purāṇas were open to be told, retold, and endlessly modified into regional and individual variations, and were immensely popularized through the means of classical and folk art. Such open access to the stones of the gods and the goddesses is an important aspect in understanding the psychological principles and processes involved in the practice of devotional religion in India.

The Literary and Artistic Context of the Path of Devotion

The literal concretization of God in the form of an image *(murti)* is a common aspect of religious devotion in the *bhakti* movement. This may be viewed as an aid

in the presentation of the deity in the form of a person, a man, woman, or child. When the deity is conceived of as a representation of an essentially impersonal entity, it is merely an object of consciousness, regardless of whether it is represented by a physical entity, or by an abstract symbol like ॐ.[14] In that case, the devotee is a mere subject who might direct his or her consciousness toward the deity as an object of awareness like any other intentional object. Psychologically, what comes into play in such a case is primarily cognition, with very little meaningful action or intense affect accompanying it. Also, the relationship with an impersonal object is only a one-way affair: from the subject to the object. However, when the deity is personalized, the devotee is a self and the deity becomes the other, thus opening up the potential for an entire range of reciprocal relationships of affection, love, admiration, forgiveness, compassion, and even envy, fear, and hate.

What the epics and the Purāṇas have accomplished is precisely this: the concretization of gods and goddesses in human form interacting with ordinary mortals. The epics accomplish the task of depicting their heroes in great detail on a large canvas of, well, epic proportions. In *Rāmāyaṇa* the story of Rāma unfolds in the form of the entire life history of a person from before his birth till some time after his death. Hundreds of events occur across a vast subcontinent as Rāma grows up as a prince in the Ganges plateau; he moves to forests in the south when sent into exile; there he makes friends with a band of monkeys (or monkeylike tribal people); the band joins him in fighting a war with the devious king of Sri Lanka, and they win back Rāma's kidnapped wife. Kṛṣṇa is a dominant figure in the epic *Mahābārata,* and the hero of the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa His life history is embedded in the story of a fracticidal war of eonic significance, and the narrative of over 100,000 verses covers numerous intricate episodes and a large number of complex characters. While the epic covers Kṛṣṇa's adult life, the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa covers his childhood in great detail. Given the large number of such literary works devoted to Kṛṣṇa together they constitute probably the richest narrative dedicated to a single personage in the history of the world. This narrative portrays him elaborately in a variety of social roles as an ideal son, brother, friend, warrior, king, husband, statesman, strategist, ally, philosopher, and so on. Rāma too, is described in terms of similar roles, although the ideals he presents are in many respects quite different. For instance, while Rāma is a most devoted husband in a strictly monogamous relationship, Kṛṣṇa is a lover par excellence sought after by countless women. The fact that the epics and the Purāṇas present a very wide range of alternative ideals is extremely important in that together they offer an immense range of choice. There is a role model here to suit men, women, and children of any age, era, background, temperament, or taste.

The timeless appeal of the complex plots, unique characters, and superb narratives of the epics is evidenced by the fact that for centuries they have been told again and again in a dozen languages and in as many varied artistic media. Stories about Rama and Krsna continue to be subjects of innumerable plays, novels,

poems, dances, dance dramas, folk tales, folk drama, cinema, and every other conceivable form of literary and artistic narrative. While for hundreds of years the stories were commonly told by uneducated folk artists in village fairs, recently both the epics were rendered as immensely popular TV serials made by slick producers and actors of Bollywood, i.e., Bombay's equivalent of Hollywood. There is also Peter Brook's *Mahābhārata* a French cinematic production studded with an international cast. Thanks to the lack of copyright, the stories have been elaborated, modified, and adopted, and thanks to the lack of fanatic censorship, they are also endlessly parodied. It is well-known that the epics have become part of the cultures of Bali and Sumatra in radically modified forms.

As parts of a living tradition, the legacy of the epics has inspired the retelling of the old plots in new ways suitable to the changing times and contexts. In British India, for instance, the Marathi playwright Khadilkar wrote a play based on the episode in *Mahābhārata* about the slaying of Kīcaka, It was presented in such a way that the villain was made to appear like Lord Curzon, the then-ruling British Viceroy who was highly unpopular for his policies in Bengal. More recently, an Indian movie presented the story of a feud between two families of industrialists with characters named after the cousins who fought the cataclysmic war of the *Mahābhārata*. The idea is, clearly, that human nature has not changed over the eons, nor have problems in life; we now fight over technology and capital even as our ancestors fought over their share of the kingdom. Contemporary feminists have replayed the stones of Sītā and Draupadī as the most wronged women in the history of the Indian culture, and in my opinion, rightly so. The continual reinterpretation of the plots and characters from the epics and the Purāṇas indicates that they are powerful narratives about emotional issues and problems of human relationships of relevance to every generation. What the epics and Purāṇas offer is not simply information and entertainment about putatively historical events and imaginary characters, but insights and concrete suggestions suitable for important issues of our lives in our times.

The importance of this cultural legacy for the study of emotion should now be obvious. The literary and fictional description and analysis of human emotions and behavior can be as illuminating and instructive as the scientific ones. This is certainly not a lesson to be learned only from the epics of India; the same is true in regard to rich literary and folk traditions of the rest of the world. Although a majority of contemporary psychologists prefer the scientific approach over the literary approach, a small number of prominent modem psychologists have derived inspiration from the literary traditions: Sigmund Freud, Henry Murray, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson, and Jerome Bruner, to name a few. What is special about the study of emotions in India is that, as noted, it flourished in the context of the study of dramatics, poetics, and aesthetics. More specifically, as I shall soon try to show, the powerful literary and artistic portrayal of a single character, Kṛṣṇa was used as a vehicle for systematic self-transformation.

The relevance of the character of Kṛṣṇa as a vehicle for self-transformation directly follows from his portrayal as a multifaceted character who plays a key role in a vast number of lives. Throughout his life, he befriends, teaches, protects, elevates, and enchants many "good" men and women, even as he cajoles, tricks, punishes, and destroys many "bad" persons such as despots and villains. All in all, Krsna is shown as a most endearing person in varied forms of relationships: as a mischievous but lovable son to his foster parents, a close and loyal friend to simple-minded boyhood playmates, a supportive confidant to several sisterly cousins and relatives, an honest friend and advisor to the Pāṇḍava brothers, a highly respected statesman wanted by both sides of a fratricidal war, a skilled military strategist, and an erudite scholar who put together a lucid compendium of a dozen different schools of philosophy in the form of a "celestial song," the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Moreover, the aspect that has endeared Kṛṣṇa to countless generations is his image as a consummate lover who enchanted every young milkmaid in the town of Vraj.

A character that is elevated to such heights is bound to be seen as too good to be true. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa has been deified more willingly, blatantly, fully, and audaciously by his devotees than were Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed by their respective followers. Regardless of whether one believes or disbelieves, likes or dislikes, deification, it may be noted that Kṛṣṇa is nevertheless described as *puruṣottama* meaning the ideal person. From the point of view of theories of personality, the image of Kṛṣṇa may be rightly viewed as an ideal of personhood. The psychological significance of such a model resides in it potential to serve as a useful guidepost for a program of self-transformation. For anyone who chooses him as an ideal, Kṛṣṇa was a man in flesh and blood, someone who faced the problems of ordinary mortals through childhood and old age. One can relate to him as a "real" human being who was mischievous as a child, teased the milkmaids as a young man, "played politics" during his adult life, even advised his friends to tell half truths, and tricked his adversaries on the battlefield. Regardless of the fact that Kṛṣṇa is also presented as a super miracle maker, ordinary mortals can still relate to him as a child, friend, lover, philosopher, hero, or in any such role as they may feel comfortable in relating.

The Role of Fine and Performing Arts in Devotional Religion

Anyone acquainted with the Indian culture would know that the fine and performing arts of India have been dominated by the Hindu pantheon just as themes from the life of Jesus dominated European art and architecture for centuries. Kṛṣṇa is arguably the most popular character presented in a large variety of art forms in India. The love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa in particular, has inspired several superb works of art. Prominent among such works is the *Gītā-Govinda,* a book of poems composed in the 12th century by the Sanskrit poet Jayadeva. These poems

(popularly including the *aṣṭapadīs* i.e., octets) express various shades of the most intense feelings of love, including romantic love in its most earthy, evocative, and erotic forms. Rādhā's intense and most selfless love for Kṛṣṇa is often considered the highest form of the expression of love between the devotee and the Lord *(madhurā bhakti)*. Jayadeva's poems, which may be counted among the best in love poetry in any language, are sung as part of temple rituals in various parts of India. Over the centuries, the themes of these poems have inspired some of the most gifted painters, singers, and dancers to present them in their respective forms of art. Time and again world-class singers and dancers have presented these poems as songs set to music in various classical modes or *rāgas,* and as themes for dances choreographed in various classical and folk styles. More recently, stones about Kṛṣṇa have appeared in separate TV serials and have even appeared in children's comics and cartoons.

Here, let me try to clarify the significance of the historical and cultural background as outlined thus far for the topic on hand. First, it should help us recognize that the concept of devotion and theories of emotion presented here are embedded in a rich cultural legacy that has developed over many centuries. Second, the repetition of the common stories in many forms makes the concept of devotion easily accessible to millions of ordinary members of the culture. Third, the artistic presentation of the devotional themes in visual and auditory forms makes them psychologically effective just as the multimedia presentation of advertisements makes them more effective than those presented in single sensory modalities. Fourth, it is important to understand that the close alliance between the fine and performing arts and Hindu theology provided the background against which Jīva and Rūpa Gosvāmī developed a theory of aesthetics to help explain the nature and efficacy of devotion to Krsna.

The Interpretation of the Path of Devotion in Terms of the *Rasa* Theory: The Views of Jīva and Rūpa Gosvamī

Jīva Gosvāmī (15th century) and his nephew Rūpa Gosvāmī (1492–1591) were followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1485–1533). Their views became known as the Gauḍīya Vaisnava school of thought because *Gauḍa* is name of the province of Bengal where it flourished, and *Vaiṣṇava* means pertaining to Viṣṇu whose incarnation Kṛṣṇa is supposed to be. Unlike other Vaiṣṇavas (worshippers of Viṣṇu) such as Ramanuja and Nimbārka who interpreted their devotion to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa within the framework of non-Advaitic Vedanta, the Gosvāmīs chose a conceptual framework from the *rasa* theory of the dramaturgical and aesthetic tradition. In this respect the ideas of Rūpa Gosvāmī radically differ not only from the six major schools of Indian thought, but also from most other schools of the *bhakti* tradition. In contrast with Sāṅkhya's view, which exclusively emphasizes self-knowledge and cognitive deconstruction of the ego as means to self-transformation

while nearly completely neglecting emotion and action, the Gosvāmīs emphasize emotion and devotion while completely neglecting cognition and knowledge.

Before turning to the Gosvāmīs' conception of emotion, it is necessary to sketch the fundamental notions of their worldview. One of their most fundamental concepts is derived from the Upaniṣadic notion that the ultimate reality, or Brahman, is characterized by the triune of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. Of these three characteristics, the Gauḍīya school puts greatest emphasis on Bliss *(ānanda)*. The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (2.7) contains the statement *"raso vai saḥ,"* which, when freely paraphrased in English, means that the Brahman is its essence, i.e., *rasa*. The subsequent statements of the Upaniṣad clarify that here rasa, or essence, means Bliss. As noted in Chapter 2, this Bliss is estimated to be 100 quintillion times greater than all the pleasures that a young, well-endowed human being can enjoy. Whether hyperbolic or not, this "psychometric" account shows how highly valued the state of Bliss is in the eyes of those of the Upaniṣadic tradition. It may be noted, incidentally, that this idea of extraordinary levels of happiness stands in sharp contrast with the Buddhist and Sāṅkhya conceptions of life as a bottomless pit of suffering. At any rate, the Gauḍīya thinkers aim at nothing short of scaling this peak of bliss, and they expect to succeed by means of intense devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Having started with the foundational notion that Bliss is the *rasa* or essence of Brahman, Jīva Gosvāmī moves on to conception of *rasa* as aesthetic relish as developed in the dramaturgical tradition of Bharata (see J. Gosvāmī 1986). He and Rūpa took many concepts from that tradition, reorganized, reinterpreted, and adapted them for their purpose. It may be recalled that, when Bharata first introduced the concept of *rasa,* he identified eight aesthetic moods corresponding to eight durable emotions (see Table 5.3). Whether Bharata recognized any more rasas is a somewhat controversial issue. At any rate, over the centuries. new ideas kept being introduced to the rasa theory, some of them claiming recognition of new and distinctive rasas. Udbhata (ca. 800) for instance, introduced the idea of a ninth distinctive aesthetic mood of quietude *(śānta)*. Similarly, Rudraṭa (800–850) suggested friendly affection *(preyān, sneha)* and Bhoja (of unknown date) argued in support of affection for children *(vatsala)*. The scholarly community would not accept such claims without considerable debate; the history of ideas in this field is full of strong arguments and sharp exchanges.

It is widely recognized by historians of Indian aesthetics that Abhinavagupta (ca. 990–1020) effectively persuaded the scholarly community to recognize quietude *(śānta)* as a distinct aesthetic mood, and to add it as the ninth *rasa* to Bharata's list of eight. The nature and number of *rasas* has been a contentious and keenly debated issue in the history of Indian aesthetics (Raghavan, 1967). Abhinavagupta's success in enlarging the list is therefore considered a great tribute to his stature as a scholar. Several centuries later, Viśvanātha (1300–1384) made a strong case for the recognition of affection for children *(vatsala)* as another major rosa.

Love for the divine *(bhakti)* was also proposed, but had not yet been widely accepted as a major rasa, when Jīva Gosvāmī's suggested that it was the single-most dominant one. Rūpa Gosvāmī took all these ideas and proposed a list of 12 rasas, all being considered as but variations of *bhakti.* His scheme organized the 12 in two subsets: the first set included five major rasas, and second had seven minor ones. Table 5.4 represents his scheme, as suggested in Rūpa Gosvāmī's (1981, 1986) *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* and *Ujjwalanīlamaṇi*

Rūpa Gosvāmī's view that all aesthetic moods are but variations of, and subordinate to, the devotional mood follows from his two basic premises: that Bliss is the single prominent feature or essence of the entire reality *(Brahman),* and *rasa* as aesthetic relish is but a variation of the Bliss of Brahman described in the *Taittirīya* Upanisad. If the whole reality is Blissful, as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas suggest, then why is it that all of us do not experience that bliss? Moreover, why do some of us turn to God, while many others do not? From the Gauḍīya viewpoint, these questions do have answers, Here again, the *Taittirīya* Upanitad provides a clue. Just prior to the statement that says that Brahman is rasa, the Upaniṣad (2.6-7) refers to the view about the genesis of the universe expressed in the *Ṛg Veda* (10.129.1). According to this view, at the beginning the universe existed as a single undivided whole. It mysteriously recognized that it was alone, and felt inspired to see itself as many. It is believed that ever since that moment (the Big Bang?), each individual being, a chip off the same old block, aspires to return to the whole,

TABLE 5.4
Rupa Gosvami's View of the Varieties of Devotional Moods and the Corresponding Emotions

Devotional moods *(rasas)*	Corresponding emotions *(bhāvas)*
Major devotional moods	
1. *Śānta bhakti*	Quietude *(śānta)*
2. *Prīti bhakti, dāsya bhakti*	Reverence for superiors *(dāsya)*
3. *Preyan bhakti, maitrī bhakti*	Friendship among equals *(sakhya)*
4. *Vatsala bhakti*	Affection for subordinates *(vātsalya)*
5. *Madhura bhakti*	Romantic love *(śṛṅgara)*
Minor devotional moods	
6. The comic *(hāsya)*	Mirth *(hāsa)*
7. The marvelous *(adbhuta)*	Astonishment *(vismaya)*
8. The heroic *(vīra)*	Energy/mastery *(utsāha)*
9. Pathos *(karuṇa)*	sorrow *(śoka)*
10. Horror *(bhayānaka)*	Fear *(bhaya)*
11. The furious *(raudra)*	Anger *(krodha)*
12. The odious *(bibhatsa)*	Disgust *(jugupsā)*

thereby trying to regain the original Bliss. This would explain why all human beings aspire to become united with Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of Brahman.

According to the Gosvāmīs, the whole of reality, Brahman, is personified as Kṛṣṇa. He is all powerful, and one of his many powers is the "power to bring happiness" *(hlādinī śakti).* This power manifests variously in all individual beings, prompting them to seek unification with Kṛṣṇa. This power is personified in its best form as Rādhā. Other milkmaids of the town of Vraja also loved Kṛṣṇa, but not with the same degree of selflessness, purity of heart, and intensity as did Rādhā. They differed in their ways of loving God, and so do all creatures. Implicitly, what prevents us from merging fully in God and experiencing the Bliss is our individuality, or the narrowness of our egos. But then why do we all have more or less small egos, some narrower than others? It has been a common belief in the Indian tradition that individual differences are congenital; they result from the unique past history of each individual creature *(jīva),* starting from the moment when the One divided itself into many. Moreover, human beings are free to act according to their will; each one of us reaps what we sow; we are what we are today because of our own past karma. We are free to choose or not choose God. It is safe to assume that this belief was shared by thinkers of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition. The idea that individuals have a tendency to seek happiness by merging themselves into something larger or with someone else is by no means an exclusively Indian idea. It resonates with David Bakan's (1966) notion of *communion,* i.e., the tendency among individuals to merge into something larger.

At any rate, seen from the Gauḍīya point of view, each individual's ability to enjoy aesthetic relish, or *rasa,* is commensurate with his or her ability to overcome the limits of one's individuality or ego and become absorbed into the publicly shared or "generalized" emotions. As may be noted from Table 5.4, in Rupa Gosvāmī's conceptual scheme, four out of five of the major devotional moods pertain to affection or love in interpersonal relationships. It is necessary to note in this context that Rūpa explicitly states that the moods are listed in the order of increasing superiority.[15] Given that the list places the devotee's relationship with his or her superiors at the lowest rung and relationships with equals, subordinates, and lover(s) at increasingly higher levels, the quality of devotion seems to be judged higher with increased levels of intimacy with God. Also, it might be fair to say that that intensity of the longing to merge with the deity is the strongest in the highest ranked romantic form and the lowest in the "quiet" form illustrated by devotees who have cultivated dispassionate attitudes. The meaning of this is clear: In Rūpa Gosvāmī's view, the greater the level of intimacy and intensity with which the devotee approaches the deity, the truer the devotion, the greater the reciprocity on God's side, and therefore, the greater the bliss experienced. Rūpa explicitly states that the lowest form of devotional love is exemplified by the joy *(saukhya)* by devotees such as Sanaka and Sanandana, who had attained high levels of dispassionateness and quietude of the mind, as yogis do. The joy experienced by yogis

(yogināṁ sukham) is joy grounded in the self *(ātmasaukhya),* which is not very deep (aghana) when compared to the deep happiness experienced in the presence of God.[16] The highest level of bliss is attained by the devotees joined with Kṛṣṇa in a most intimate romantic love as was Rādhā.

This principle seems to be applicable in a similar manner to art experience: the greater the intensity with which one "flings" oneself into the process of creating or appreciating an object of art, the deeper the aesthetic experience. Put in a different way, the more one moves away from one's ego toward the object of art - or of devotion - the greater the intensity of experience. If this idea helps explain the gradation of divine love from the quiet to romantic forms (as represented in Table 5.4), in what way are the comic, the marvelous, and even the odious all variations of the devotional mood? In this regard, Rūpa Gosvāmī invokes a principle from the theory of aesthetics, which states that some transient *(vyabhicāri)* emotions are often present as ancillaries when one experiences an aesthetic mood associated with a durable or "major" emotion. For example, bashfulness, a transient emotion, might accompany as an ancillary to the more durable erotic feeling when one experiences the aesthetic mood of love. Similarly, in the experience of the major devotional mood of divine love as friendship among equals *(maitri bhakti),* the comic mood might appear as an ancillary mood. A typical Gaudiya example would be to imagine a situation in the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa, where Sudama and other boyhood friends of Kṛṣṇa are enjoying each others' company, and laughter breaks out when Kṛṣṇa plays a practical joke on the milkmaids. Similarly, horror and even the odious mood are aroused when the devotee is watching a play in which Kṛṣṇa slays a demon and the demon's blood and guts spill out. Nevertheless, these ancillary moods only deepen the admiration and love of the devotees for their hero. Given that the Gosvāmīs follow the dramaturgical model and use the enormously rich narratives containing an endless variety of situations and characters, any type of emotion and aesthetic mood can be placed in the context of a single mood, devotion.

Individual Differences Among Devotees And Their Choice of Appropriate Forms of Relating to Kṛṣṇa

The path of devotion may be understood basically as a way to improve and enhance one's ways of loving God and sharing the Bliss that He incarnates. However, given our distinct individuality, each person, if he or she wishes, must begin in whatever way he or she feels comfortable, and continue at a pace and in a manner that is appropriate for his or her temperament and needs from time to time. Shrivatsa Goswami (1982), a contemporary author who writes about *bhakti* as conceived in the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava tradition, explains the approach to the path of devotion in a simple and lucid manner:

> Because of its finite basis ... worldly love ... cannot lead to infinite and eternal bliss, and it is to this that the human quest tends. The limited phenomenal rasa must finally be transmuted into the transcendent, absolute *rasa.* To attain such a rasa the devotee chooses a personally suitable mode of relation with Krishna *[sic]* from those exemplified by the people of Vraja. The deep loving relation is crystallized in certain conceits that a devotee must adopt. One may regard Krishna as one's master, charge, friend, or beloved. Such conceits, remembered from dramatic situations in Vraja and gradually appropriated, give rise to permanent relationships. One comes to consider Krishna as a master *(dāsya),* a son *(vātsalya),* a friend *(sākhya)* or a beloved *(mādhurya).* When catalyzed by ancillary factors, these modes of intense attraction and attachment *(rati),* the substantive causes *(sthāyī-bhāva)* of love, culminate in the ultimate aesthetic experience of Krishna-rasa. Such realization is the highest form of love.[17]

As suggested by Goswami, a particular individual may choose to position him- or herself vis-à-vis Kṛṣṇa (or another deity of his or her choice) in the role of a servant, child, parent, friend, or a lover. It is my impression, however, that in practice, a particular mode of orientation may be the preferred or dominant for a particular devotee rather than an exclusive one. Thus, in a Sanskrit prayer that is a most common part of the daily ritual of countless Hindus, the devotees refer to the Lord as their mother, father, brother, and friend. At any rate, *bhakti* as described by Shrivatsa Goswami can be said to involve the cultivation of an intensely emotional relationship with the deity in a particular preferred role in such a way that the devotee is totally engulfed in the experience of the devotional mood (bhakti rasa).

There are some well-known examples of the cultivation of specific role relationship with God. The women saint–poetesses Janābāī (1260–1353) and Mīrābāī (16th century), for instance, are said to have appointed themselves as a servant and a lover of God, respectively. For long periods they engaged themselves in behaviors that could be safely called *role-play* in contemporary psychological terms. In more recent times, Ramakrishna Parmahamsa (1836–1886) is reported to have played the role of a child to the goddess Kālī in whose temple outside Calcutta he served as a priest (Kakar, 1991, p. 21). For some 6 months he is said to have dressed, lived, and behaved like a young woman, playing the role of Rādhā in relation to Kṛṣṇa. This idea of a man becoming a servant or lover of God is of course not exclusive to Hinduism; the Sufi saint Rumi is said to have thought of himself as "God's slave." According to A. R. Arasteh (1980) some Sufis thought of the "I–thou" relationship between a person and God as a "spiritual marriage" (p. 122). Besides servant and lover, there are certain examples of unique role relationships. In one of his poems, the 13th-century Marathi saint–poet Naraharī Sonār, a goldsmith by occupation, refers to God as his customer. There is a legend about him that once he was called on to make a golden ornament for the idol of Viṭhobā in Paṇḍharpur.[18] In that sense, God became his customer! In his poem Narahari interprets this unique relationship in terms of a highly imaginative symbolism, saying that he uses his intellect as the scissors to steal the gold of bhakti while cutting a deal with his customer — God.

Examples of devotion expressed in the form of serious, sustained, and complete role-play are quite rare. In its ordinary form, devotion is usually expressed through a variety of rituals. The rituals may be performed on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis; they may be occasional or regular, individual or collective, at home or in the temple, spontaneous or organized. Nine different forms of worship are commonly suggested in the literature:[19]

1. Listening to the stories about God *(śravaṇam)*
2. Singing songs and chanting *(kīrtanam)*
3. Remembering or repeating God's name *(viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam)*
4. Offering foot-salutation *(pādasevanam)*
5. Worshipping by offering flowers, food, incense, and so on *(arcanam)*
6. Offering salutation and praise *(vandanam)*
7. Offering service, or becoming God's servant *(dāsyam)*
8. Cultivating friendship or love for God *(sakhyam)*
9. Offering one's self to God *(ātmunivedanam)*[20]

These different forms of worship are often considered secondary or subordinate (gauni) ways of devotion. Some of these forms, such as offering flowers, burning incense, singing prayers, and the like are parts of daily rituals for many Hindus. The seventh and eighth forms in the above list, namely becoming a servant or expressing friendship, are not easy to practice as part of rituals, nor are they "secondary" or relatively superficial. Indeed, they are considered major forms by Rūpa Gosvāmī (see Table 5.4). The last one, offering one's self *(ātmanivedanum),* is anything but secondary; it implies surrendering or dissolving the ego-a highly difficult feat.[21]

Much of what has been said about devotional Hinduism so far in this chapter is common knowledge to those who may have followed or studied Hinduism. It is not common, however, to find a psychological analysis or understanding of the same. In the balance of this chapter, I wish to attempt a psychological analysis and interpretation of the path of devotion in the light of the concepts of Indian and Western psychology. My focus will be on the processes of self-transformation that might result from the practice of major and subordinate forms of devotion. Before turning to such an analysis, it will be useful to briefly describe what an ideal devotee is supposed to be like. Such a description would suggest a benchmark for assessing a devotee's progress on the path of devotion.

The Ideal Devotee: Character and Rarity

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is clearly one of the most highly respected texts in the Indian tradition. Ascribed to Kṛṣṇa, the views of the *Gītā* are particularly authoritative and significant from the point of view of the followers of the devotional path. In the 12th chapter, the *Gītā* (12.13–20) presents a description of an ideal devotee.

The most distinctive features of an ideal devotee are that he or she has no ill will toward any creature, is friendly, forgiving, compassionate, and devoid of egoism. A true devotee is even minded in the face of pain or pleasure, always manifesting inner contentment; he or she is free from bursts of joy, anger, fear, and agitation. No longer troubled by desires, he or she neither hates nor rejoices, is equally fair to friend and foe, and is not swayed by either flattery or insult. This ideal of personhood has been popularized in various ways by the followers of the *bhakti* movement. In a famous poem titled *"vaiṣṇavajana to tene kahiye"* composed in Gujarati by Saint Narasi Mehta (1415-1481), for instance, much of the same ideas are expressed. Mahatma Gandhi included this song as part of his prayer meetings, thereby gaining from and adding to the immense popularity of the song and its ideals. To put it simply, a person who has traversed the path of devotion and reached its destination has two major characteristics: he or she is rid of egoism and no longer experiences emotional ups and downs.

This description of the ideal devotee closely resembles its accounts of those who have reached the state of a "stable intellect" after successfully traversing the path of knowledge *(Bhagavad-Gītā,* 2.55–72). In other words, the path of knowledge leads to the same destination as does the path of devotion. Both help dissolve the ego and end the game of seesaw that tosses us between affective peaks and troughs with each gain and loss. Many partisans of the path of devotion, including the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, think that the path of their choice leads to greater heights than other paths. They claim that it takes the devotee to the highest levels of Bliss, not merely to the cessation of suffering promised by Sāṅkhya. The 17th-century saint–poet Tukārām (1973, poem 3251) describes his experience of Bliss thus: "There are waves of joy in a cavernous lake of joy; there is joy inside and out!"[22] Having tasted this infinite bliss, Tūkā (as Tukārām called himself) is no longer interested in ending the cycle of birth and death promised by the Vedāntists for those who set out on the path of knowledge. Perpetuating infinite Bliss is far better than ending the cycle of birth and death; he would happily suffer through the pangs of waiting in the womb to be born again into a life of hardships, so he can immerse himself into the joy of devotion to God.

The path of devotion is claimed to be superior in many ways: it does not require prerequisite qualifications, and hence is easily accessible to all, plus it is easy to practice. No wonder, then, that millions are attracted to it. But, alas, devotees such as Tukaram or Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who manifest lack of egoism and infinite compassion in their behavior, are very rare. Moreover, despite the millions that flock to the temples and pray at home every day, there seems to be an extreme shortage of bliss and a superabundance of suffering and malaise. Why are the devotees of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa busy pulling each other down within their communities and are equally busy fighting crusades with outsiders to their faith?

To help understand the rarity of ideal devotees, we may turn to the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (7.16), which identifies four types of devotees: some are in distress, some

curious, some are seeking wealth, and there are a few wise ones. The wise ones, alas, are in minority; a large majority turn to God only when they are in some kind of trouble - illness, a court case, death in the family - and when no ordinary measure seems to work. Rare are the devotees who are willing to offer themselves unselfishly as true devotees should. Worse still, a common custom in India is to make a "contract" to offer something to God, if he or she gets something in return: hitting a jackpot in a lottery, success in a court case, passing an examination, or a nod from the paramour. Offering oneself completely *(ātmanivedanam)* is the last thing on the minds of a vast majority of the garden variety of devotees.

Emotion and Self-transformation in Religious Devotion: A Psychological Interpretation

In this concluding section of the chapter on self and emotion, I shall try to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the path of devotion with a focus on understanding self and emotion in the light of philosophical and psychological principles discussed earlier.

Ontological and Epistemological Issues

The concept of God, whether personal or impersonal, is totally incommensurable with the worldview of science that prevails today in psychology as well as other fields. From the standpoint of science, the concept of God, particularly in a personalized form implied in devotion, must be pure fiction. But seen from a "scientific" psychological point of view, fictions sometimes matter as much if not more than facts. Speaking about the fictional character of the concept of self, the psychologist Donald Hebb (1960) once said: "The self is a fantasy all right, but a real fantasy with effects on human behavior" (p. 741). Hebb gave a simple analogy in support of his argument. A phantom limb is clearly an imaginary entity, but the pain or pleasure experienced in it is no less "real" than in the original limb prior to its amputation. The story of Kṛṣṇa arouses passion in the same way that fictional characters such as Hamlet or Iago do. At any rate, given our focus on the psychology of emotion, we should sidestep the issue of the ontological status of the deity, and focus instead on the ontological status of emotion, which is clearly the most central psychological issue concerning the path of devotion.

From the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava point of view, the physical or bodily aspects of emotional experience and expression are far from irrelevant. Indeed, the Gosvāmīs devote an inordinate amount of space in their writings to provide a highly detailed description of the gross as well as the minute physical features of dozens of emotional states, even as Bharata did in his dramaturgical writings. However, unlike the "naturalistic" theories of emotion such as those of James, Cannon, Delgado, and others, they do not try to reduce emotions to their physical concomitants. Instead, much like the social constructionists, the Gosvāmīs following the

rasa theorists, place emotions in the social or interpersonal space. There is little meaning to love outside the space between the lover and the beloved. In this sense, the Gosvāmīs' conception of reality resembles what John Shotter (1993) calls the "conversational reality." In this domain, ontological issues such as the mind–body problem do not matter much; it is not very important to ask whether bodily reactions result in emotional experience or vice versa. Nor is it very important to raise the epistemic issue such as "how do we empirically verify whether the person under observation is experiencing the emotion X?" Instead, emotions are recognized as a matter of mutual relationships between persons and as a matter of experience and understanding. Regardless of the many differences between them in ontological, epistemological, and ideological matters, the social constructionists and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavites are alike in stressing that it is important to conceptualize emotions primarily (if not exclusively) as a matter of the relationship between the self and the other, between persons who understand and relate to each other in terms of the mutuality of social roles in a given culture.

Against this background, it may be fair to say that Averill's (1980) notion of emotions as transitional social roles is fairly applicable to Rūpa Gosvāmī's notion of devotional feeling as a form of affection in the mutuality of relationships between parents and children, masters and servants, friends, or lover and beloved. Outside of such paired social roles structured within a larger society, Sarbin (1986, pp. 90) speaks of a different, dramatistic type of roles. Thus, in Sarbin's view, Hamlet is a prototypical "avenger," Othello a "jealous husband," and Iago the epitome of "envy, rancor and hatred." Such dramatistic roles, he says, "exist in story telling of fables, fairy tales, morality plays, bedtime stories, soap operas ... and myths and folktales of a society" (p. 91). Seen from this Sarbinian viewpoint, the "divine" love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is a prototypical "dramatistic" role of the Hindu culture.

To put it in terms of the perspectives of Rosaldo (1984) and Lutz (1987), the Gosvamis' theory of emotion is a typical ethnotheory of emotion. The purpose of such theories is to help make sense of psychosocial phenomena that are an integral part of a specific culture. While the culture provides the context for the theory, the theory in turn tries to enlighten members of a culture while at the same time supporting and enriching that culture. Given the already established value in the Indian culture of differing ways of self-transformation, the Gosvāmīs adopted the rasa theorists' view of emotion as a tool in understanding and explaining how the devotees' lives are transformed in their journey on the "path of devotion." Let us see what sense it makes when examined from the vantage point of the constructionist theory of emotion.

Self-Other Relationships and the Self-transformation of the Devotee

In the previous chapter, I tried to interpret Advaita Vedāntic meditation in the light of George Kelly's approach to therapy. Here it would be appropriate to

examine the path of devotion in the light of the therapeutic applications of psychodynamic concepts and role theory. Seeing it from the vantage point of Freudian psychodynamics, the path of devotion could be seen as a systematic way of the *sublimation* of drives through repeated presentation of cultural ideals through a variety of literary and artistic modes. Even as Freud conceived of love, or Eros, as an all-encompassing human tendency with erotic love at its center, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas conceived of divine love as a cosmic force, while regarding romantic love as its highest form of expression. It may be remembered from Chapter 3 that Erik Erikson stressed the *mutuality* of social relations, and correspondingly focused on social emotions of trust, fidelity, love, and care as those that develop between the individual and his or her parents, comrades, leaders, partners, and children. Similarly, the path of devotion emphasizes an individual's relationships with the same sorts of alter roles, and seeks to direct them to an idealized role model. Heinz Kohut, working within the Freudian tradition, holds that for the healthy functioning of a personality it is essential to establish strong bonds of affiliation between self and "selfobjects." In simple terms, what he means is that every person needs other persons such as parents, caregivers, or loved ones who provide support, comfort, and reassurance in a sustained manner so as to become integral and essential parts of the self. Kohut (1984) sees deficits in the formation of strong bonds between self and selfobject as the basic cause of psychopathology, and his primary therapeutic strategy involves correcting such deficits by supplying empathic support (pp. 65–66). Seen from a Kohutian point of view, the path of devotion can be considered as a form of therapy that tries to create and establish deity as a selfobject that is most forgiving, loving, and reassuring, and always available to the devotee in bad times and good.

Given that the concept of role is central to self-transformation through devotion, the process of change in the devotee may be meaningfully compared with changes induced in the clients of role therapy. A form of role therapy that seems most closely comparable here is the "fixed-role therapy" developed by George Kelly (1955, Vol. 1, pp. 360–451). The main ideas behind Kelly's technique is to help a client to improve his ineffective or otherwise problematic ways of behaving in specific role contexts. The first step in this process is to ask the client to write a "self-characterization sketch" in which he describes his own typical ways of behaving in a problematic situation, such as in dealing with his demanding and unreasonable boss. Taking such a sketch as if it were a sketch or a script of a dramatic performance, the therapist and/or her associates assist the client in rewriting the client's sketch or script into an ostensibly more effective performance of the role. The client is first encouraged to try out the new script perhaps with the help of an "actor" to play the boss's role in the boss's typical fashion. After such "rehearsal," the client is encouraged to transfer this "new and improved" style of role play to the real-life situation for which it is designed with the hope of improvement in performance.

Given the many differences in their contexts, there are obvious limits to the comparability of the technique of fixed-role therapy with the path of devotion. There is no professional therapist who would help fabricate a custom-made role sketch for a fee,[23] although it is not inconceivable that in the Indian context a guru could replace the therapist in guiding his or her disciple. Regardless of this and other differences between the two models, there are nevertheless similarities at deeper levels. Interestingly, for instance, Kelly (1955, p. 373) suggested that in fixed-role therapy when the clients substitute a construct system suggested by the therapist in lieu of their habitual construct system, they should adopt it with a sense of "make-believe," or "let's pretend." This sounds much like Shrivatsa Goswami, whose words cited above that the devotee must adopt certain "conceits" in selecting a personally suitable mode of relationship with Kṛṣṇa But once such a "conceit" is adopted, as in the case of a devotee choosing to be, say, a friend of Kṛṣṇa a large variety of story lines are available in the numerous literary works that sketch the roles that various friends of Kṛṣṇa played. The devotee then could select one of the many modes of behavior, use it like a prescription by a Kellyian therapist, and try it out in real life.

Indeed, that is exactly what extraordinary devotees such as Mirabai and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa did in their lives. Both wore the clothes and lived and acted in real lives like Rādhā The deep level of self-transformation that both devotees are said to have undergone makes sense in the same way in which role therapy is claimed to be effective. As their biographies indicate, both Mīrābāī and Ramakrishna were considered weird by many ordinary people around them, and both suffered much criticism and other problems for acting in such unusual ways. Most ordinary devotees are not prepared to go to such levels of serious involvement in their "conceits." Devotees who relate to their deities mainly by listening to their stories would presumably be influenced in the same way that people who listen to any kinds of stones. Like the secular cinemagoers and novel readers, their religious counterparts might vicariously learn from the punishment of villains and from the victories of heroes.

The Psychology of the Various Forms of Worship

It is commonplace that, generation after generation, large numbers of people in most societies follow varied ritualized forms of worship addressed to concrete or abstract symbols of divinity. Whether behavior in the form of rituals is thought of as meaningful or meaningless, crucial or trivial, from the point of view of "scientific" psychology, religious rituals seem to be voluntarily undertaken and apparently "enjoyed" by most who engage in them. Assuming that they are enjoyable to the performers, how could we account for the positive affect associated with religious rituals? Let me suggest an answer in the light of the concept of "flow" suggested by the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975). According to

Csikszentmihalyi, a variety of activities in work and play are conducive to "act with total involvement-as *flow*. In the flow state, action follows upon action according to an internal logic that seems to have no need for conscious intervention by the actor" (p. 36). Such activities are found in diverse situations, such as highly demanding work in surgical operations, in playing games like chess, as well as in recreational activities like rock climbing. Usually, says Csikszentmihalyi, such activities are "autotelic- that is, people seek flow primarily for itself, not for the incidental extrinsic rewards that may accrue from it" (p. 36). He says that play provides the flow experience par excellence, and points to extensive literature suggesting analogues of flow in "transcendental" and "religious" contexts, including collective ritual and "practically any other form of ritual experience" (p. 37). Singing songs, chanting the name of a god, collective dancing, and other such activities that are regular parts of the various forms of worship are superbly suited to create what Csikszentmihalyi has called the *flow* experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

The analogy of "play" in this context is certainly not far-fetched in the Hindu devotional context, where the activities of the entire universe have been thought of as God's "play" *(līlā)*. More particularly, in the case of devotion to Kṛṣṇa the annual festival of 9 days of autumn *(nava rātri)* celebrated with stick dances *(dāṇḍiyā rās)* in Gujarat and elsewhere is particularly conducive to a flowing activity in which large numbers of men, women, and children can participate. In various parts of India, all sorts of play that Kṛṣṇa was supposed to be involved in Vraja are recreated: throwing color on each other *(holi, raṅga pañcamī)* in Northern and Western India, or climbing on human pyramids to "steal" butter from hanging pots in Bombay and vicinity, for instance. Like the notion of *play,* which is an integral part of the devotional tradition, the notion of *flow* is very much explicit and integral to the worship of Kṛṣṇa in particular. The notion of flow is intimately connected with the notion of aesthetic relish as *rasa,* which literally means "juice." Srivatsa Goswami (1982) expresses its significance succinctly as follows:

> Whether the flow of aesthetic experience be from the Ocean to a small pond or vice versa, a connecting stream (dhārā) is required to conduct it. That stream is none other than Radha herself, the leader and exemplar of *gopis,* and the two syllables in her name *(ra-dha)* suggest how reversibly the stream *(dhā-ra)* flows. It is her grace that makes the flow or rasu possible, connecting the human and the divine in a liquid medium, submerging them in a world of līlā (play) (p. 76).

It is interesting to note that Goswami connects the experience of *flow* in devotion with that in *play.* As Csikszentmihalyi (1991) has pointed out, various types of individual as well as collective activities in play and recreation as well as work involve the experience of flow, which is generally pleasurable. From a psychological point of view outlined by Csikszentmihalyi (1991, pp. 178-183), certain kinds of activities allow action and awareness to merge so as to enable a person to concentrate intensely on the action and become temporarily oblivious to distrac-

tions arising from the surrounding. This could happen while playing a musical instrument or listening to music, while having sex, while being engaged in a religious ritual, or even while marching to a band. According to Csikszentmihalyi, "people in flow report a *loss of self-consciousness"* (1991, p. 185, emphasis original). As noted, aestheticians from Abhinavagupta in medieval India to Bullough in 20th-century England have noted that a temporary loss of self-consciousness is a common feature of all types of aesthetic experience. In moments of such loss of self-consciousness, the common worries and concerns of the ego are temporarily suspended, which seems to at least partly account for the pleasurable nature of aesthetic experience and "relishing" *(rasa)* of devotion.

It is important to remember that, as pointed out by Csikszentmihalyi (1993), an important condition for an activity or experience to be an enjoyable flow is that it must become autotelic, i.e., "worth doing for its own sake" (p. 179). This condition may be fulfilled in virtually any type of activity regardless of its nature and context. By the same token, it is possible to find and sometimes to deliberately introduce autotelic activities in a variety of programs, regardless of whether they are solitary or collective, religious or secular, sacred or profane. Autotelic activities could be part of a religious dance leading to a benign mystic trance, or of a military band leading troops to a genocidal war. Csikszentmihalyi (1993, Ch. 9) has suggested that throughout history, religious and ideological movements as diverse as Confucianism, Islam, and Jesuit Catholicism have devised activities guided by clear rules that have been enjoyable to millions, but their practice has been part of larger programs that have not always been benign. In discussing such movements Csikszentmihalyi has remarked that "no new cultural game is immune from exploitation" (p. 265), and there is no reason to assume that games devised in the name of Hindu gods may prove to be exceptional in this regard. At any rate, the joy derived from singing, dancing, and similar artistic expressions of devotion has been considered similar to, but not the same as, the ultimate bliss *(brahmānanda)*. Moreover, devotional singing and dancing, which produce a pleasurable flow experience as do many other types of activities, are considered as secondary or lower *(gauni)* forms of *bhakti*. According to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava interpretation, the path of devotion aims at the continuation of the flow experience till it reaches the highest level of bliss, and the aim is to keep it at that level by being repeatedly reborn in the atmosphere of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. By contrast, Patañjali Yoga expects to attain the state of bliss by stopping rather than perpetuating the flow of experience, and aims to prevent rebirth.

The Contrast between Bhakri and Yoga

The metaphor of flow is not unique to the path of devotion; it may be recalled that William James implied it in his idea of the "stream of consciousness." Vyāsa, a major commentator of Patañjali Yoga aphorisms also used a similar expression,

"mind-river" *(citta nadī),* and spoke explicitly of the flowing nature of the processes of consciousness. However, the Yogic and devotional strategies of dealing with the flow of mental and physical activities are almost diametrically opposite. The devotional approach clearly seeks to facilitate the flow and keep it going by engaging the devotee in continuing physical and mental activities. On the contrary, the concentrative meditation of Yoga wants the yogi to minimize physical activity by sitting in a stable posture, then attenuate the flow by withdrawing the attention from the intentional object, and slow down the flow of ideas until it comes to a standstill. In the devotional approach, an attempt is made to keep as many sensory modalities active and constantly engaged as possible. In the *rāsa-līlā* dance, as in the dance of the Sufi dervishes, for instance, the devotees are surrounded by the sound of constant singing, chanting, and playing of musical instruments; kinesthetic senses are engaged in continuous movement of the whole body; the eyes are constantly engaged by brilliant colors of apparel worn by the dancers and by the decorations; and there is even incense burned and sweets ingested now and then to involve olfaction and gustation. By sharp contrast, silent environments are recommended for Yogic meditation, and the meditator must withdraw the senses from their objects. While in devotional worship the sensory experience is enriched and constantly fed, in Yogic meditation the senses are impoverished and starved.

Ironically, despite the differences just noted, both *bhakti* and Yoga aim at weakening and ultimately destroying the control of the narrowly conceived ego involved in or identified with practical goals of mundane life. Both try to help realize a transcendental self through disidentification with the ego. But, as Nalini Kanta Brahma (1993) correctly points out, "the realization can be had in two different ways, (i) by emphasizing the object-factor of consciousness, or (ii) by emphasizing the subject-factor. The Bhakti-mārga takes the first method and Yoga and Jñāna-mārga the second" (p. 242). In terms of affect, the strategy in devotion is to reach out to the object and increase the amount of affective energy cathected onto it. Yoga, on the contrary, requires the yogi to systematically decrease the intensity of affect through the cultivation of dispassionateness *(vairāgya),* and aims at complete decathexis. For the path of devotion, it does not matter which kind of emotion is directed toward the deity or object of devotion; even negative emotions such as fear or even hatred will bring the same result. According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa even those who approached God with lust, hatred, fear, or friendship have been absolved of their sins and have attained the same destination as His devotees insofar as their mind was completely absorbed in Him because of their intense emotions *(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* 7.1.30).[24] In his analysis of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, Noel Sheth (1984) notes that

> what matters is not the motivation, but the intensity of the emotion.... [B]oth the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa relate the hatred of Krishna [sic] with devotion: for both what is important is not the motivation, but the concentration on Krishna, which can thus be considered a form of meditation. (p. 153)

It is said that having learned from an oracle that Kṛṣṇa will be his nemesis, Kamsa felt extremely scared, and began to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Even as a result of such paranoia, the fear of Kṛṣṇa nevertheless helped Kamsa realize that God was ubiquitous, so the result is no different from the Vedantist who realizes that Brahman is everything.

NOTES

1. See Aristotle's *de Anima,* (403^a2-403^b19). The selection and translation used for the present study is from Calhoun and Solomon (1984, pp. 48–50; see also p. 43).
2. For an English translation of relevant selections from Sartre's *The Emotions: A Sketch of a Theory* and a discussion of his views of emotion, see Calhoun and Solomon (1984, pp. 244–250).
3. H. J. Bershady has recently published his own new translation of select essays by Scheler, including the one on the meaning of suffering (see Scheler, 1992, pp. 82–115).
4. Saint Tukārām's original Marathi words in poem No. 88 are:

   sukha pāhatā javāpāde |
   duḥkha parvatā evaḍhe |

   (see Tukārām, 1973, p. 13).
5. yato abhyudayaniḥśreyasasiddhiḥ sa dharmaḥ |
   This definition of *dharma* is attributed to the Vaiśeṣika aphorisms (1.1.2) of Kaṇāda (see Kaṇāda, 1985).
6. For a detailed account of the Sāṅkhya system, see Larson and Bhattacharya (1987), or Larson (1969). For a Sanskrit text of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhya Karikā* and Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on the same, see S. Śāstrī (1940); for an English translation, see Larson (1969, pp. 255–277). Among the secondary sources, I have found S. N. Dasgupta's (1922/1975, Vol. 1, Ch. 7) chapter on Sāṅkhya Yoga in his *History of Indian Philosophy* most useful.
7. Vācaspati Miśra, a scholar known for valuable commentaries on several classical texts, is believed to have flourished in mid-9th century, CE. Among the several available editions of his commentary on the *Sākṅhya Kārikā,* called the *Sāṅkhya Tattva Kaumudī,* I have used the Sanskrit text edited by Sivanarayana Sastri (1940) and Hindi translation by R. S. Tripathi (1982).
8. The Sāṅkhya Kārikā (43–45) lists the following eight basic predispositions (bhavas) that are said to accrue to an embodied person: predisposition for (1) meritorious action *(dharma),* (2) unmeritorious action *(adharma),* (3) knowledge or discrimination *(jñana),* (4) ignorance or non-discrimination *(ajñāna),* (5) detachment *(vairāgya),* (6) attachment *(avairāgya),* (7) power of control *(aiśvarya),* and (8) impotence or lack of control *(anaiśvarya).*
9. Bharata lists the eight rasas in Chapter 6, stanza 15, followed by the list of basic emotions in stanza 17. See Bharatamuni (1926/1956, pp. 266–267). There are several translations with commentaries available on Chapters 6 and 7 of Bharata's *Nātyaśāstra.* Of these, I have consulted a Marathi translation with commentary by R. P. Kangle (1973).
10. This list appears in Bharata's Nātyaśāstra. Chapter 6, stanzas 18–21.
11. In preparing this section, I have consulted several works in Sanskrit, Marathi, and Hindi, along with a few publications in English. The works I found most useful in preparing my account of the generalization of emotion include a Marathi book on Mammata's *Kāvyaprakāśa* by K. S. Arjunwadkar and A. Mangrulkar (1962), and a separate Hindi book on this topic by Premakant Tandan (1983). Tandan has discussed in some detail the similarity between rasa theorists' view of the generalization of emotions and Edward Bullough's notion of psychical distance.
12. I have discussed this issue of music as meditation with several prominent musicians currently

active in the concert circuit in northern India. While some musicians consider music part of their meditation and spiritual self-development, many others do not.

13. Viṣṇu, the sustainer, is one of the Hindu "Trinity," along with Brahmā (not the Brahman of Vedānta) the creator, and Śiva (also called Śaṅkara and numerous other names), the destroyer.
14. This is a sacred symbol widely used to represent ultimate reality or God. Considered as a compound of three characters in the Nagariscript, a, u, and m, it is pronounced as "aum," or "om," and forms a common part of chanting in meditation and prayers.
15. The following are the words from Section 2 *(dakṣiṇa vibhagā),* subsection 5 *(vibhāvākhyā laharī)* of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhaktiasāmrtasindhu.* It lists five types of major devotional moods arranged in an order in increasing superiority:

    mukhyastu pañcādhā śantaḥ prīth preyāṁsca vatsalaḥ |
    madhuraścetyamī jñeyā yathāpūrvamanuttamāh |

    This stanza is numbered 88 at the beginning, and 115 at the end, in the text edited by Shyamadas (see Gosvami 1981, p. 551).
16. In *Bhaktiasāmrtasindhu* Rūpa Gosvāmī (1981, p. 562) characterizes the joy of *santa bhakti* or the devotional mood of the type of quietude, in the following words:

    prāyah svasukhajātīyaṁ sukharh syādatra yoginām |
    kintvātmasaukhyaamaghanam ghanastvīśamaym sukham || 5 ||

17. Here Gosvami refers the reader to sections 110–111 of Jīva Gosvāmī *Prītisandarbha,* mentioning page 67 of the text edited by Purīdāsa. In the text edited by Shriharidasa Shastri, the relevant ideas may be found particularly in the Hindi commentary on page 370.
18. This legend is mentioned in an unsigned article on Narahari Sonar in the Vharatiya Samskrtikosa the Marāṭhī encyclopedia of Indian culture edited by M. Joshi (1967, Vol. 4, p. 697).
19. An oft quoted verse *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reads as follows:

    śravanaṁ kīrtanam visṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pādasevanam |
    arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyaṁ sahhyamātmanivedanam || (7.5.23).

    I am grateful to Dr. Nalinee Chapekar for helping me locate the source of this verse.
20. The translations are mine.
21. This idea resonates with Thomas a Kempis's notion of self-surrender mentioned in Chapter 2.
22. This is my paraphrase of the following words: ānadāce ḍohī ananda taraṅga |
    ānadaci aṅga ānandāce || (see Tukārām, 1973, p. 540, poem 3251).
23. It is rather remarkable that, as noted by Rychlak (1981, p. 742), George Kelly had never taken a fee from a client in over 30 years of therapeutic practice (see Kelly, 1969, p. 54).
24. The words in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that convey the idea as paraphrased by me here are as follows:

    kāmād dveṣādbhayātsnehādyathā bhaktyeśvare manaḥ |
    āveśya tadaghaṁ hitvā bahavastadgatim gatāḥ||
    (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 7.1.30).

    I am grateful to Dr. Nalinee Chapekar for helping me locate in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the words cited here.

6

SELF-AS-AGENT
The Psychology of Action

In this chapter, I shall discuss the relationship between self and action, or the notion of the self-as-agent. Human agency has been a most neglected topic in the mainstream of modem psychology throughout the century that has passed since the founding of the laboratories of Wundt and James. While several existentialists usually insisted, and humanists often implied, that human beings are free agents responsible for their actions, most behaviorists implied, and Skinner insisted, that human agency and freedom are an illusion. As noted in Chapter 2, since the late 1930s, psychology in North America turned to the study of personality, ignoring the ideas of persons as moral agents who could be held responsible for what they do or do not do. However, as the end of the 20th century is drawing near, human agency has started to emerge as a topic of serious study in psychology.

Are human beings free to act as they choose, or are they more or less coerced to act in particular ways by the unbreakable chain of causality? This dilemma has engaged some of the best minds through centuries of history of ideas in the West, and there are no signs of resolution in sight. As pointed out by Martin Hollis (1977), there are two competing views of human nature in contemporary social science literature. One view characterizes human beings as basically free, and the other characterizes human beings as determined. Hollis has dubbed the first view the *Autonomous Man* and its rival as the *Plastic Man.* In contemporary psychology, the advocates of these two positions are lodged in the separate camps of the humanists and the behaviorists. Watson, the founding father of behaviorism, clearly espoused the Plastic Man when he declared that, if given an opportunity to train babies right from birth, he could turn some into competent professionals and shape others into delinquents, by systematically manipulating their environments. Skinner expanded on this theme by suggesting in *Walden Two* that all of humanity could be brought under control so as to create a utopian society, and in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* he dismissed the notion of human agency. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers respected human

freedom to the extent of insisting that even in the role of a therapist, he must be nondirective. The well-publicized debate between Rogers and Skinner (1956), the many strong reactions to Skinner's (1971) publication of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity,* and the continuation of the debate through the recent years illustrate the persisting tension between the voluntarists and the determinists.[1]

Although the current debate has revived some of the age-old arguments on both sides of the issue, few psychologists have tried to trace the roots of the current views to the classical positions argued by a number of famous thinkers over the centuries that have informed the contemporary debate. Without the historical background, it is difficult to make sense of the extreme polarization of psychology between believers and nonbelievers in human freedom. When I look at the contemporary controversy from a traditional Indian viewpoint, I am most intrigued, for there is a conspicuous absence of a parallel debate in India even among those Indian thinkers who hotly debated related issues such as causality over the centuries. It is not strange, however, that psychologists are not very much interested in tracing the historical background of the issue, for many of them share the positivist disregard of history. Like Auguste Comte, the father of positivism, many a modem psychologist has considered old ideas as obsolete and unworthy of our attention. Skinner (1974, p. 167), in keeping with the positivist disdain for ancient ideas, repeatedly suggests that belief in forces internal to the organism is a vestige of the animistic thinking typical of "primitive" people that should be immediately discarded by the *science* of psychology. Although many good textbooks of history of psychology are available today, most of them fail to give a clear account of the origin and development of the current positions for and against human agency.

Against this background, I shall try to present in the next several pages a brief reconstruction of the historical debate in the West on the freedom–determinism issue. There is a long history of debate over the freedom–determinism issue in Western tradition.[2] I cannot pretend to discuss this issue in all its complexities; I must restrict the scope of discussion and select some aspects/ideas over others. The selection must inevitably be arbitrary at least to some degree, and here it is slanted toward the context and purpose of the present inquiry. In the first part of the chapter, although the focus will be on Western thought, I shall try to identify clear parallels as well as sharp contrasts between Indian and Western ideas where appropriate. In the second part, I shall focus on some relevant approaches from the Indian tradition.

Views of Self-as-Agent in Western Thought and Some Parallels from India

In the Western tradition, the origin of the deterministic position is often traced to Democritus (ca. 460–370 BCE), the ancient Greek thinker who held that

everything that happens in the universe is strictly controlled by laws that combine or separate atoms of which things are made. Epicurus (341–270 BCE), who followed Democritus in holding an atomist view of the world and a materialist concept ofthe soul, could not accept the fatalist implication ofthis view. Assuming that the ordinary experience of freedom is not a mere illusion, he suggested that mind atoms occasionally "swerve" here and there, rather than being absolutely and totally determined by other atoms colliding with them. One can see the origin here ofthe differing conceptions ofdeterminism: one that admits to something like "chance," thereby loosening the hold ofexternal forces implied in the other, more strict form of determinism.

Determinism, whether conceived in either a strict or loose way, is inextricably connected with the notion of causality. Indeed, determination of events is most usually understood as *causal* determination. The basic idea is that every event is the result of a cause, not a mere happenstance. In other words, the universe is a cosmos, not a chaos. This idea is implicit in many systematic worldviews, scientific or commonsense, ancient or modem, Eastern or Western. As we saw in Chapter 3, in the Advaita Vedantic worldview, the doctrine of karma assumes causal relationships among human actions and their consequences as part of a cosmic order, and the belief in this doctrine is common to the otherwise diverse systems of Indian thought in Buddhism, Hinduism, as well as Jainism. In the Western tradition, Aristotle pioneered the systematic conceptualization ofcausality. Over the centuries, his views invited considerable following and elaboration, as well as strong criticism and debate, so as to decisively shape the diverse contemporary conceptions of causality, determinism, and human agency.

Aristotle's Four "Causes"

Aristotle's famous notions of the four varieties of "causes" arose from his search for reasons why something is the way it is. Basically, they are answers to the following questions in regard to any event or phenomenon: What is it? (formal cause); ofwhat substance is it made? (material cause); by which agency? (efficient cause); and to what end? (final cause) (Winston, 1985). The distinction among these four types is based on Aristotle's complex notions of "matter" and "form." Although these terms are currently in wide usage, their contemporary meanings are different from their Aristotelian counterparts. Aristotle's discussion of "reasons why" (aitiá) in *Physica* (Book II.3), *Metaphysica* (Book A.3),3 and other writings is somewhat ambiguous, and has prompted several alternative interpretations by scholars. As noted by Winston (1985), Aristotle's categories have no exact equivalents in current terminology, since the ancient terms have undergone considerable transformation through history. It will be useful to first explain Aristotle's views with the help of examples of each category from his own writings before accounting for their influence on the current context.

As noted, the Aristotelian notion of formal cause was invoked while trying to answer the question "what is it?" with reference to a given event, phenomenon, or object. If the answer to such a question is "brick" or "statue," it implies a category in which we place the object in our understanding. What we mean thereby is not only the pattern or shape of the object, but its essence. In the case of the brick, for instance, it could be the use to which it can be put, such as building a wall, by virtue of its shape and other properties. Aristotle gives the example of the ratio of 1 : 2 as being the most essential feature of a musical octave, and calls it the octave's "formal cause." He refers to matter and form in a relative way such that, while clay is said to be the material cause of the brick, brick is the material cause of the wall, wall that of the house, and so on. The clay is said to actualize its potential in the "form" of the brick, the brick into the form of the wall, and so on. A typical Aristotelian example of efficient cause is the builder as efficient cause of a house. It clearly implies some external agency, action, or force that brings about a change in something into its present state. By contrast, the final cause is the end result, or purpose, "for the sake of which" some change may be brought about. Thus, health is the goal for the sake of which one exercises, or beautification of a living room is the purpose for which a statue may be sculpted, and so on.

Several psychologists (e.g., Griffore, 1978; Rychlak, 1979; Moore, 1984) have pointed out how current conceptualizations of causality parallel Aristotelian "reasons why" to varying degrees. According to Moore (1984, p. 88), an explanation similar to Aristotle's *material cause* is used when reference is made to the genetic makeup or physiological structure of the organism. A similar approach was implied when Hempel (1935/1949) tried to explain a toothache in terms of decayed tissue in the gums. In general we can say that a mental phenomenon is explained in terms of a material cause by trying to reduce it to its physical substratum or concomitant. Take for instance the explanation of dream states in terms of concomitant rapid eye movements (REM), or of associative learning in terms of neural connections in the brain.

The notion of *efficient cause is* most commonly implied in the concept of the stimulus. Skinner (1953, p. 47) describes the stimulus as an external agent that controls a behavioral response. In *Contingencies of Reinforcement,* Skinner (1969) explains the term "stimulus" as originating from the Latin term for "goad," (i.e., a pointed rod used to urge on an animal), and calls it "the action of the environment" (p. 3). Skinner (1969) adds that Jacques Loeb's research on tropisms demonstrates the ways in which "the environment somehow or other *forced* the organism to behave" (p. 3, emphasis original). Such characterization of stimuli clearly fits the Aristotelian category of the efficient cause.

The notion of *formal cause* as described by Aristotle is complex, and its correspondence with contemporary ideas is particularly difficult to establish. Nevertheless, it should be clear that formal cause involves explaining something by pointing to its essence, as illustrated in his example of the ratio 1 : 2 as the formal cause of an octave. After all, we *define* an octave by a specific relationship between

notes (measured by the length of string required to produce them, for instance). This example prompts me to suggest that a psychologist uses something very similar to formal cause when he or she tries to explain or understand the behavioral pattern: periodic swings in mood by which a patient's behavior is understood as belonging to the "manic–depressive" category by definition. Explanations involving typologies and traits (authoritarianism, introversion, etc.) imply basically the same sort of idea. Another aspect of formal cause follows from Aristotle's view that matter has *potential* that may *actualize* in its "form"-like an acorn actualizing its potential in the form of an oak. Biological approaches to human development, such as Piaget's and Erikson's, can be said to invoke basically this Aristotelian type of explanation insofar as they explain behavior in terms of the unfolding of a pattern that is "built in" to the organic structure right from start. The Maslowian self-actualization model has a more than accidental correspondence with the Aristotelian idea of the actualization of potentials.[4]

The *final cause* is much easier to express in modem terminology, since its meaning has not changed considerably through the ages. Now, as in the past, it means *purpose,* and involves a teleological explanation. Aristotle thought that it was important to account for any phenomenon in terms of as many of the four "reasons why" as may be relevant in its context. However, he was viewed as having emphasized teleological explanations over explanation in terms of the other three types of reasons. As we shall soon see, it was Francis Bacon's sharp criticism of teleological explanations in understanding nature that brought final causes into serious disrepute. Except for the existentialists and the humanists who defiantly reject a psychology based on the natural science model, most psychologists treat teleological explanations as well as the doctrine of free will with either indifference or sheer contempt.

Aristotle's ideas are important for psychology today because he laid out the framework for the discussion of causality for the Western intellectual tradition. The concept of human agency is inextricably connected with a view of causality in general and with teleological explanations in particular. Since the highly differing views of human agency that prevail in contemporary thought have been shaped by the twists and turns in the history of the concept of causality, I shall sketch prominent landmarks in that history in the remaining portion of the first half of this chapter. I shall introduce parallel ideas from Indian thought wherever relevant in this discussion, and will turn to Indian conceptions of human agency in the second half of this chapter.

St. Augustine: Psychology's Links with Theology

In the Christian tradition, God has always been viewed as the all-good, omniscient, and omnipotent creator of the universe. Within the first couple of centuries of the Christian era, when increasing numbers of followers were trying to understand the apostolic teachings, many vexing questions regarding the coher-

ence of the teachings arose. For instance, if God is all-good and omnipotent, why did He create a world beset with famine, plague, treachery, and wars that led to untold human suffering? In other words, who is responsible for evil? Mani (or Manichaeus), a Persian who declared himself a prophet in 242 CE, suggested that evil is the doing of Satan, not God. While this suggested solution to the problem of evil affirms God's goodness, it compromises His omnipotence. St. Augustine (354–430) set out to defend the Christian doctrine against this Manichean heresy. A way of doing this was to assign to human beings freedom of will, so that the human beings can be held responsible for their sin and its consequences, and God is absolved of any responsibility for the pitiful human condition. In *City of God* (Book XI, Section.22), Augustine (426/1960) declared: "... the soul which has shown itself capable of being altered for the worse by its own will, and of being corrupted by sin ... is not a part of God, nor of the same [good] nature of God, but is created by Him, and is far different from its Creator" (p. 366).

While the existence of evil seems incompatible with the belief in God's all-good nature, His omniscience seems irreconcilable with the notion of human free will. If God knows everything at all times, he must have also foreknown everything, good or bad, that his creations would ever do. If God knows in advance what I shall do, the future course of events is unavoidable, and I would never do other than what He has foreseen me doing. The Roman author Cicero (106–143 BCE) had clearly recognized the fatalist implications of the doctrine of complete divine foreknowledge (predictability) of human behavior, and denied it so as to preserve the idea of free will. Augustine, too, wished to make men free, but unlike Cicero he did not want to be sacrilegious by denying foreknowledge. In *City of God* (Book V, Section 10), while taking issue with Cicero, Augustine (426/1950) flatly declared: "He, whose foreknowledge is infallible, foreknew not that fate, or fortune, or something else would sin, but that the man himself would sin, who, if he wills not, sins not" (p. 158).

Augustine understood very well the paradox involved in simultaneously affirming the doctrines of free will and foreknowledge of actions, and he tried to make them compatible. What was his argument in defense of such compatibility? As noted by W. T. Jones (1969, Vol. 2, p. 99), Augustine's argument was based primarily on the eternal and immutable nature of God. When God is characterized as eternal, it is implied that He is not a temporal creature like human beings; God knows everything that happens, but not before or after the events as we human beings do. Indeed, terms like "before" and "after" cannot be applied to divine considerations, according to Augustine. In *Confessions* (XI. 12), he makes this point in his typical rhetorical style: "How, then, shall I respond to him who asks, 'What was God doing *before* He made heaven and earth?' I do not answer, as a certain one is reported to have done facetiously ... 'He was preparing hell ... for those who pry too deep' " (398/1955, p. 253) Without going into details of this issue, we may simply note that Augustine's "theological" perspective on the

nature of human action was linked with issues like God's creatorship of the world and the need to reconcile His goodness with the existence of evil. As we shall presently note, Śaṅkara's discussion of the nature of human action became enmeshed with the same sort of issues- a remarkable parallel given the historical and geographical gap that separated them.

In his commentary on the aphorisms of Bādarāyaṇa, Śaṅkara (1980,2.1.34 –37),[5] discusses the dilemma arising from the common observation that all creatures are not equal; some are happy, some unhappy, and still others inbetween. Neither the Advaita Vedāntist nor his critic could deny this fact. But the latter poses a question: Is not God, who created them all, open to the charge of partiality and cruelty toward them? As noted in Chapter 3, Śaṅkara (1980,2.1.34-35) says no, because happiness or misery results justly from the creatures' own good or bad actions. Like the rain that does not favor some creatures over others, God treats all creatures with equality. That rice and barley seeds grow into different types of plants is no fault of the rain. Similarly, that angels, people, or animals enjoy or suffer differently is not the fault of the Lord, but simply a just consequence of their distinctive past experience and action *(karma)*. But then the critic might ask: Who prompted the creatures to act in different ways in the first place? No one, replies the Advaita Vedāntist; the cycle of action and its consequences *(saṁsāra)* is without a beginning *(anādi)*.

Here, as in the case of St. Augustine's views, we need not examine how justifiable the arguments are or how convincing their worldviews are. As part of a discourse in psychology rather than theology, we can take their views as but different ways of accomplishing a common life task: the cognitive construction of reality- a quest that raises cosmic issues and tries to answer them within a broad and internally consistent framework. From this standpoint, we may simply note the remarkable parallels in their respective ways of "world building." Both start with a common premise, namely a belief in God and his goodness, although their conceptions of God are in some ways worlds apart. Within this limited range of commonality, both are confronted with precisely the same dilemma: how to reconcile the existence of evil with God's unquestionably good nature, regardless of the fact that they both view evil as well as God's creation of it somewhat differently. In psychological terms, both are beset with a common problem: *cognitive dissonance.* Like the subjects in Festinger's (1957) experiments who had encountered contradictory beliefs, these thinkers try to make their views internally consistent. In doing so they adopt remarkably similar solutions: both invoke the notion of timelessness- of God in Augustine's case, and that of the cycle of actions and their consequences in Śaṅkara's. Both try to protect "core constructs" (belief in the good God) while allowing peripheral cognitive constructs to change. In modem psychological terminology, this core construct is what is called the "just world hypothesis" (Lerner, 1980).

Lerner's research, like the bulk of research in modem psychology, is based

largely on the behavior of college sophomores recruited for the typical psychology experiments. The comparison of young students in modem institutions of secular science with revered intellects like St. Augustine and Sankara might appear sacrilegious to the devout followers of each. But here we may take a clue from Piaget, who dares to compare ordinary children with serious philosophers, and demonstrates parallels in their thinking about issues like time, space, and causality, albeit at different levels of intellectual sophistication. Viewed from a cognitive psychological viewpoint, both St. Augustine and Śaṅkara may be said to have based their worldviews on the "just world hypothesis," even as psychology's sophomore subjects often do. Here, we may ask: If indeed there are universal human tendencies to construct internally consistent worldviews and to view the world as morally just, are psychologists devoid of such tendencies?

Many psychologists would be loath to compare their own "scientific" theories with the worldviews of their sophomore subjects on the one hand and of "religious" figures on the other. Questions like "Will justice be ultimately established in the world?" would seem to be irrelevant to the value-free enterprise of psychology. Many of us just assume that we have nothing to do with theologians of any ilk. Many of us would like to believe that, in this postmodern era, we have left behind the hot and messy issues of God and His relation with the world; but have we? Not quite, for many psychologists as well as scientists in various fields seem to practice value-free science while at work, but switch to their value commitments and religious beliefs while at their homes, churches, or temples. As we have noted before, prominent psychologists like Skinner and Erikson seem to have set aside their religious inclinations during their academic life and expressed them in their postretirement phase. In connection with the issue on hand it would be useful to note Skinner's own words in his autobiography: "My early religious experience was important.. .. I see that the point of *[Beyond Freedom and Dignity]* could be summarized as a scientific defense of the radical dissenting Protestantism of early 19th-century England" (Skinner, 1983, p. 402). Skinner further clarifies that he "formulated 'responsibility' within a determined system of behavior," following the footsteps of the Protestant theologian Jonathan Edwards's attempt to reconcile the doctrine of "predestination with man's moral responsibility" (p. 403). These words are important not because they seem to expose the "hidden theological agenda" lurking behind the secularist facade of a prominent scientist, but because they show how both religious and scientific worldviews are commonly concerned with the issue of freedom–determinism, and that scientists are not as insulated from the theological perspectives as is commonly held.

Francis Bacon: The Natural Science View of Knowledge

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) recognized and deepened the medieval distinction between two ways of knowing: one through the words of the Lord, and another

through His works. The former of course refers to the interpretation of the scripture (Bible), and the latter to the study of Nature. During the medieval times, followers of the Hebraic tradition such as St. Augustine studied the scriptures, while the followers of the Hellenic tradition were devoted to the writings of Aristotle. Bacon, like Galileo after him, emphasized "reading the book of nature" more than interpreting God's words in His Book. More specifically, he favored studies aimed at commanding nature to act in accordance with one's desire over those that aimed primarily at overcoming the opponent in argument with skillful use of words. Moreover, he thought that human beings, who were created in His image by God and were like angels in being endowed with the capacity to reason, also had been endowed with the right of "dominion over Nature." We could exercise this right through the understanding of Nature's laws by means of our capacity to reason. Bacon has rightfully earned a place of pride in the history of civilization by inspiring the study of nature by direct observation and experiment. When Newton enunciated his famous laws, he was following Bacon's path; he thought it was important to discover the laws that the Lord God had laid down for nature to obey. Bacon had a strong sense of legitimacy in the exercise of power over nature because he was convinced that it was to be used exclusively for "the relief of man's *[sic]* estate" (Bacon, 1859a, p. 294). Moreover, he seriously and sincerely meant that the business of discovery and use of scientific knowledge was to be open to the whole of humanity and not just particular communities. Bacon clearly espoused the true spirit of science.

There is absolutely no doubt that the Baconian project has been highly successful and has benefited a vast portion of humanity. The fact that scientific knowledge often has been promoted and used for exclusive and even belligerent goals of particular nations is a related but separate issue. At any rate, the enormous prestige legitimately earned by the natural sciences is primarily due to their success in helping devise technologies for controlling diseases, mass manufacturing of useful products, and other benign and benevolent uses in the service of humanity. By comparison, the humanities and *interpretive* science- history, philosophy, literary criticism, law, and the like- do not directly help improve human health and prosperity as do science and technology. As such, the humanities have been inadvertently reduced to a significantly lower level of prestige when compared to natural sciences. It is against this background that we can understand the concerted effort of many modern psychologists to not only fashion their discipline on the lines of the natural sciences, but also to dissociate it from the humanities.

Bacon's emphasis on discovering the laws of nature and their use in the control of events in nature has obvious implications for the issue of freedom versus determinism. Bacon clearly believed in the *causal determination* of natural events, and he even implied a "strict" determinism. Thus, in *The Great Instauration,* he said: "the chain of causes cannot by any force be loosed or broken, nor can nature

be commanded except by being obeyed" (Bacon, 1620/1860), p. 32).[6] If all events in nature were determined by ironclad laws, how could we control them in a desired manner without somehow loosening their operation? Commanding nature by obeying her clearly involves a paradox, for how could one command and obey at the same time? This paradox is essentially no different from the paradox theologians face in reconciling Providence with human will, except that the scientist ascribes power of control to Nature rather than God. As we shall soon see, Hobbes, who followed in the footsteps of Bacon, showed how determinism and freedom could be compatible within a naturalist framework. Before we turn to Hobbes's ideas, however, it is necessary to consider Bacon's attack on Aristotle's views of causality, since it deeply influenced the development of scientific thought, and continues to influence psychological thought to this day.

Anthony Quinton (1980) has poignantly described the thrust of Bacon's criticism of the Aristotelian view of causality: "Bacon is rightly understood to have been an inveterate and influential enemy of the doctrine of final causation" (p. 44). The main point of Bacon's attack is best given in his oft-quoted words from *The Advancement of Learning* (Bacon, 1605/1859a):

> For the handling of final causes, mixed with the rest in physical inquiries, hath intercepted the severe and diligent inquiry of all real and physical causes, and given men the occasion to stay upon these satisfactoly and specious causes, to the great arrest and prejudice of further discovery. (pp. 357–358)

By citing Aristotle's own examples of final cause such as "the leaves of trees are for protecting the fruit," Bacon forcefully showed their futility and suggested that we would be better off following Democritus than Aristotle. Bacon seemed to love shooting at Aristotle at every possible opportunity, but he reserves his most caustic comments for the concept of final cause. The style and force of Bacon's writings not only undermined the Aristotelian notion of final cause, but also inspired a successful enterprise of scientific inquiry into efficient causes. Bacon made it clear that final cause explanations were useless only in the study of physical causes, not in "metaphysic," thereby meaning what we now call the human sciences. Indeed, he thought that final causes were just fine "within their own province." But modem psychology in its behavioristic phase tried to expel final causes from explanation of human behavior altogether.

While Bacon's ban on final causes was clearly limited to the understanding of events in nature, his plan of action seemed similarly restricted to domination over nature, presumably excluding human beings. Bacon derived sanction for this enterprise from the prevailing Christian worldview. According to the Biblical story of creation, God created man in his own image and granted him "dominion over the earth" (Genesis, 1.26). So, control of nature was man's birthright. William Leiss (1972, pp. 12–19) has shown how several related developments in the history of European thought led to a progressive establishment of complete mastery over

not only the entire nonhuman world- plants in the forests, animals and fish of the land and sea- but also over all human beings other than oneself. This theme of mastery has been an important part of the collective agenda of the European civilization under the guiding theme of "progress" (Bury, 193211960). This "progress" was to culminate in a utopian society portrayed variously since the period of Enlightenment by St. Thomas More (1516/1965) in *Utopia,* Francis Bacon (1627/1859b) in *New Atlantis,* and, among several others, by B. F Skinner (1948/1969) in *WaldenTwo.*

Bacon's writings have been widely- and rightly- recognized as having been influential in the development of modem science. It is equally important to recognize the influence of several allied themes of his teaching: his slogan "knowledge is power"; the use of the power of scientific knowledge to control events in nature; the tacit understanding of knowledge as the discovery of the laws of nature, as opposed to self-knowledge; a pervasively extraspective stance turned away from the inner world of meanings and intentions; the implicit separation of human beings and their environment; and the eventual extension of the sphere of control to include *other* human beings. Skinnerian psychology clearly illustrates the deep influence of all these themes.

The implications of these themes in understanding self-as-agent, the specific topic under consideration, should now be clear. In the Skinnerian model, as in the Baconian, the scientist's mandate to control the rest of the world is taken as an unquestionable birthright. While Bacon had turned to God for the scientist's authority to control nature, Skinner did not have to go to Him; over the centuries science had attained a legitimacy of its own while secularizing itself along the way. The positive contributions of science- the use of electricity, vaccines against deadly diseases, and countless others- have convinced the public that science does indeed work in the service of benign and benevolent human goals. It must be remembered, however, that scientific knowledge is useless unless it is put in the hands of a purposeful agent. As noted in Chapter 2, even if we set aside the question of *who* will control *whom,* no utopian dream would come true if *nobody* was free to choose among alternative courses of action. How could someone like Skinner, who intends to use technology in an ambitious project, be such a vociferous enemy of the doctrines of human agency and freedom? How could one make sense of such a grand irony?

It seems to me that the answer to this question lies partly in the *extraspective and impersonal stance* ingrained in the worldview of science based on the Baconian model. When this stance becomes entrenched, one is turned away from the inner world, gradually learning to neglect one's "self" along with the feelings, wishes, and "will" that it harbors. This is exactly opposite to St. Augustine's stance of looking "inward" with a deeply personal focus. The enterprise of knowing in Baconian "science" becomes equated with studying the world "out there." In the capacity of a scientist, I cannot include myself as part of the world;

the scientist must somehow remain outside or "above" the world he or she studies. Although I must admit to myself as being a part of the human collectivity, as a scientist I study "them," never "myself." Such a stance is most clearly reflected in the work of Max Meyer's (1922) "psychology of the *other-one,"* mentioned before. The desire for control combined with the neglect of the inner self and a focus on "other ones" conspires to produce what David Bakan (1965) has called the "mystery–masterycomplex in contemporary psychology." What this means is that the goal of exercising lordship over nature becomes paramount, while at the same time turning the "self" into a perpetual mystery.

It is important to remember that Bacon conceived of science as a *public* enterprise. After all, the insights of science would be of no use to humanity if they remained the private property of a few. Moreover, since science involved the laborious work of collecting facts, true benefits of such labor could not accrue unless each science added to a common repository, such as a library, where they could accumulate generation after generation and be open to use in the interest of humanity at large.7 The Baconian model of science turns the scientist into an investigator who diligently collects "facts" devoid of any personal meaning, and adds them to a publicly held cumulative record of the world as it is (or at least is supposed to be) in actuality. Nobody can deny the immeasurable benefits of a publicly open character of scientific knowledge, nor can we ignore the importance of keeping personal meanings out of the domain of science. However, this does not mean that the person who plays the role of the scientist is a disembodied soul or a robot. In actuality, every scientist is driven by personal motives in doing her or his job, although in the capacity of scientist she or he must keep these motives out of the business of investigation so as to avoid the resulting biases. As scientists, psychologists must learn to ignore and disregard the role of purpose underlying their own behaviors. But does that mean that they should ignore or deny the purposefulness of behavior among their subjects as most behaviorists (except Tolman, 1932/1967) did? Seen from the vantage point of the history of ideas, the behaviorist denial of human agency is meaningfully relatable to Bacon's rejection of final cause as an explanatory principle. There are of course several sources of influence other than Bacon that shaped the Zeitgeist of contemporary psychology. Important among them is Thomas Hobbes. While Bacon did not deny purpose and final cause in human beings, Hobbes explicitly denied it entirely, whether in the outer world of nature or in the inner world of human minds.

Thomas Hobbes: The Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism Within a Physicalist Worldview

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) followed a materialistic view of the world along the lines of Democritus, taking the motion of particles as the centerpiece of his model. In Democritus's view, the soul was composed of atoms, and thoughts *(eidola)* arose in it by way of the motion of particles induced by atoms emanating

from objects in the outer world. In the same vein, Hobbes conceived of mental events as "phantasms," i.e., motions of the tiny particles of the brain. Thus, what appears in the stream of consciousness as an intention to act, i.e., volition or "will," is but a motion of some atoms in the brain that sets in under the impact of outside atoms moving along their trajectories. Although such motions in the brain are minute, they can trigger motions in the whole body, even as a few falling rocks often set off huge avalanches. Thus, intentions for action are but links in an endless causal chain in which inert atoms transmit momentum from one to the next.

Thus, Hobbes offers a thoroughly mechanistic view of human behavior where only efficient causes operate. Working in an atmosphere charged with the powerful notions of Francis Bacon, Hobbes tried to go beyond Bacon in dispelling Aristotelian final causes not only from physics, but also from metaphysics. In *Elements of Philosophy* (Part II.10), Hobbes (1655/1839) declared: "A *final cause* has no place but in such things as have sense and will; and this also I shall prove hereafter to be an efficient cause" (p. 132; emphasis original).8 Hobbes was not a physicist committed to working with push–pull mechanisms in the laboratory, but rather was a man deeply involved in social and political life. Moreover, he was a "political scientist" (to put it in contemporary terminology); he authored *Leviathan,* a classic volume that presents a distinctive political theory. Writing in the European tradition of political thought, Hobbes (in *Leviathan,* Ch. 21; 1651/1962, p. 163) quotes Aristotle's words that note how democracy ensures individual liberties more than any other form of government. An Englishman raised in the political ethos shaped by the Magna Carta, the Charter of Liberties, Hobbes recognized the importance of parliamentary democracy, of being able to buy and sell in a free market, of freedom to speak, and of even disobeying a despot. Nevertheless, having witnessed inhumanity of man to man under conditions of civil war, Hobbes was equally in favor of (an ostensibly benevolent) monarchy. Caught between the value of liberty on the one hand and that of a sovereign's peacekeeping rule on the other, he tried to reconcile liberty of the individual with state control. Moreover, he extended conceptual reconciliation of opposing principles beyond the sphere of politics by suggesting the compatibility of freedom of will with determinism at a cosmic level. Hobbes tried to accomplish this through a radical redefinition of the concepts of freedom and will.

In *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society* (Vol. 2, Ch. 9), Hobbes (1651/1841) wrote:

> Liberty, that we may define it, is nothing else but an absence of the lets and hindrances of motion; as water shut up in a vessel is therefore not at liberty, because the vessel hinders it from running out; which, the vessel being broken, is made free. And every man hath more or less liberty, as he hath more or less space in which he employs himself: as he hath more liberty, who is in a large [space], than he that is kept in a closed prison. (p. 120; emphasis original)

According to some historians of Western philosophy, Hobbes's views have proved to be highly influential in shaping 20th-century conceptions of freedom and

determinism. The following quote from Richard Taylor (1967) succinctly interprets the historical significance of Hobbes's ideas:

> Generations of philosophers, while for the most part rejecting Hobbes's materialism, have nevertheless followed him in his view of liberty.... In the twentieth century Moritz Schlick, A. J. Ayer, and many others have made the point that freedom is not opposed to causation but to constraint. The significance of these ideas is enormous, for they appear to offer the means of once and for all reconciling the apparent opposition between determinism and freedom, thus dissolving the whole problem of free will. Many philosophers are still convinced that this insight is entirely correct and that there really is therefore no problem of free will. (Vol. 2, p. 365)

The influence of Hobbes's ideas on contemporary psychology should be obvious. Note, for instance, the following words of Skinner (1974): " 'Freedom' usually means the absence of restraint or coercion, but more comprehensively it means lack of any prior determination" (p. 54). While clearly echoing Hobbes's ideas, Skinner does not refer to their source. I have met many psychologists who hold similar views but are oblivious to their historical origins.

Notwithstanding the immense popularity of Hobbes's views, however, the problem of free will is far from resolved, or even "dissolved" by simply declaring it tobe a pseudoissue. The main problem with the idea of freedom-as-lack-of-obstruction is that it robs the concept of volition of two essential properties: first, the *anticipation of a future outcome* "for the sake of which" a certain course of action is chosen; and second, its putative power to *produce* a desired change. Stripped of these crucial connotations, the Hobbesian notion of freedom loses its distinctively human significance, particularly in understanding moral behavior, and therefore personhood.

As suggested by Taylor in his words just quoted, it is of course possible to accept Hobbes's view of freedom without endorsing his materialist thesis. However, a physicalistic worldview, which is clearly prevalent among many psychologists, buttresses determinism. Ever since Isaac Newton formulated his famous laws of motion, physicists have been able to describe and predict a widening variety of natural events with increasing degrees of precision. Enthused by the predictive power of Newtonian physics, the French mathematician Pierre Laplace (1749–1827) suggested that, if we can amass a sufficient amount of information, it will be, in principle, possible to work out a grand formula according to which every single event in the future could be accurately predicted, and everything in history could be "postdicted." Laplace's promise begins to look increasingly viable as more and more satellites are placed in space to collect vast amounts of information about earthly and celestial objects, and as increasingly powerful supercomputers are designed to crunch astronomical amounts of information in trillionths or zillionths of a second. The principle of *indeterminacy* would appear to tarnish Laplace's grand design, but only marginally. For, as noted by Sir Karl Popper (1966), "... physical indeterminism ... is merely a doctrine than *not all* events in

the physical world are predetermined with absolute precision.... [I]t does not entail the view that 'there are events without causes' ..." (p. 9; emphasis original). At any rate, whatever be the limits to predictability imposed by the principle of indeterminacy, the popularity of the physicalist worldview seems to grow with advances in scientific knowledge, which in turn seems to tighten the grip of determinism.

In his essay *Of Clouds and Clocks,* Karl Popper (1966) has pointed out that a physicalist worldview implies the metaphor of the universe as a huge automaton or clockwork rather than a hazy cloud floating in windy skies. Human beings are but cogwheels or subautomata in a vast, complex machinery. The view of human bodies as automata can be traced to at least as far back as Descartes, a junior contemporary of Hobbes. This view was elaborated by de La Mettrie (1709–1751) in the 18th century, and is celebrated by computer scientists in the 20th. With the increasing sophistication of computerized robots, it is becoming more and more difficult to tell the difference between an android and a human being. The famous "Turing test" challenges us to tell the human response apart from a computer's response to the same question, and it is no longer easy to pass such a test. Under these conditions, the computer is becoming the most cherished model for the understanding of human behavior. The computer, especially the self-programming variety that is able to learn from its past mistakes and change its course accordingly, is the most appealing model for human behavior. This "internal" factor of self-regulation is a significant change from the clockwork model, and we shall return to this issue later in this chapter. Here, let us note that according to the Hobbesian physicalist model, no changes occur except due to *external* conditions impinging on the individual in an "efficient cause" fashion.

Popper (1966, p. 11) has pointed out an important implication of such a model: A physicist with sufficiently detailed information about the physical condition of an artist or author's body and its surroundings could, at least in theory, predict precisely where the author's pen would strike the paper or the artist's brush would touch the canvas. Given the specific physical conditions, the author or the artist could not have done otherwise, and as such, they could not create something new; their bodies could only be conduits for the physical forces pushing in a totally predictable manner. Moreover, as pointed out by Popper (1966).

> [W]e are deceiving ourselves ... whenever we believe that there are such things as arguments or reasons which make us accept determinism. Or in other words, physical determinism is a theory which, if it is true, is not arguable, since it must explain all our reactions, including what appear to us as beliefs based on arguments, as due to *purely physical conditions.* (p. 11; emphasis original)

It should now be clear why Popper has called physical determinism a nightmare. It may be argued that any doctrine that views human behavior as being strictly and completely determined by external factors leads to the same nightmarish conclusions; it does not matter whether these external factors are physical forces or other

efficient causes, or various deities of a pantheistic worldview, or almighty God. In Hobbes's own lifetime, Descartes believed in both deity determinism as well as physical determinism, but tried to escape from the fatalistic implications of such determinism by assigning the power of choice to an "internal" agency, the soul. Descarte's views have had great influence on modem thought, and as such deserve close examination.

René Descartes: Volition and the Mind-body Dualism

In the Western tradition, the distinction between body and soul dates back to the ancient Greek as well as Hebrew worldviews. Pythagoras (ca. 582–507BCE) made a sharp distinction between the mortal body and the immortal soul caught in a cycle of births in a way similar to that of the Upanisads. Plato conceived of human beings in terms of a tangible body plus a separate, intangible psyche, while Aristotle viewed the body and form as being inextricably joined together. The Platonic concept of the soul was gradually transformed through the neo-Platonism of Plotinus (ca. 205–270CE). Neo-Platonist conceptions are said to have deeply influenced St. Augustine, and through him the later Christian thinkers. Descartes (1596-1650), working within the tradition of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, reformulated the traditional conceptions of soul and body in the context of a mechanistic worldview that was being developed by Galileo (1564-1642), a senior contemporary. A devout and practicing Catholic, Descartes was unwilling to adopt the totally naturalistic and seemingly atheistic views of Galileo and Hobbes. Tom between two conflicting worldviews, Descartes proposed a thoroughly dualistic worldview that sharply separated the world of tangible bodies determined by physical forces from the domain of intangible and free souls. In this view, body and soul, or matter and mind, were conceived to be divinely created substances with highly contrasting *attributes* (see Table 6.1).

It is not necessary to discuss all the attributes of the two Cartesian substances here. Focusing on the issue at hand we must first note that the unthinking physical substance in Descartes's scheme is fully determined by laws that govern mechanisms, such as the lever. The unextended substance or soul was said to possess a God-given freedom of will, but Descartes's own account of movements in the physical world casts doubt on the soul's ability to influence them. If, as he insisted, God "always preserves an equal amount of movement in the universe, how could the soul add new movements from outside the physical world or stop those that are in progress? As an answer to this question we might speculate that perhaps Descartes held that although the *quantity* of motion of the body could not be altered by anyone, the rational soul, "lodged in ... [the] body as a pilot in a vessel,"[10] could nevertheless affect the "course" or *direction* of motion. To help make sense of such a possibility, Descartes contrived the notion of animal spirits that putatively run back and forth through pathways connecting the brain with the limbs,

TABLE 6.1
Contrasting Attributes of Mind and Matter
as Conceived by Rene Descartes

Body (matter)	Soul (l'âme: soul, mind, or self)
Determined	Free
Extended	Unextended
Unthinking	Thinking
Tangible	Intangible
Divisible	Indivisible
Destructible (Mortal)	Indestructible (Immortal)

acting as fast messengers." This notion had its day till von Helmholtz (1821–1894) demonstrated that what ran across the neural pathways in the body was simply electrical current- a form of physical energy that strictly follows the law of conservation of energy. Despite the lack of such insights that were to appear centuries later, Descartes himself was aware of the logical difficulty in reconciling the doctrine of free will with that of "Divine preordination." Indeed, in his *Principles of Philosophy* (Part I, Principle XLI) Descartes (1641/1911, Vol. 1, p. 235) clearly concluded that this paradox was beyond the comprehension of limited human intelligence.

In his own days, one of Descartes's junior contemporaries, Arnold Geulincx (1624-1669), recognized the need to bridge the yawning gap between the radically different Cartesian worlds of mind and matter. He suggested a "parallelist" solution to the problem, saying that events in the mental and physical world do not causally interact; they merely co-occur, just as two perfectly synchronized clocks strike precisely on the hour — without having any causal connections between them. Many different solutions to the "mind–body-problem" have been proposed over the centuries, but none has been able to satisfy everyone. The dualist metaphysics of Descartes have been criticized by modem Western philosophers ranging from existentialists on the one hand to analytical philosophers on the other. It is neither possible nor necessary for us to survey the whole range of solutions suggested thus far to solve the mind–body problem. It would be useful, however, to examine Gilbert Ryle's most influential critique of the Cartesian ontological categories.

In his well-known work, *The Concept of Mind,* Ryle (1949/1973) mounts a strong attack on Cartesian dualism. He notes first that the Cartesian model assumes that careers constituting episodes of minds and bodies belong to *two different kinds of existence,* and allows no bridge in between: "Transactions between minds and bodies involve links where no links can be" (Ryle, 1949/1973,

p. 65). The thrust of Ryle's attack against dualism lies in showing that the doctrine first contrives the myth of two separate worlds with totally different properties and languages to describe them, and then goes on to find equally artificial ways to connect the two. It first creates mind as a "ghost in the machine" and then tries to exorcise it by invoking more ghosts, such as the "animal spirits." Although in the end Ryle seems to tacitly ask us to recognize the observable machine and bury the intangible ghost, his overt message is that we should abandon the misleading categories of mind as well as matter. The idea is to avoid the "category error," and thereby to dissolve the mind–body problem.

We need not review all of Ryle's arguments here; given the focus of this chapter on the self-as-agent, it will be useful to note his most central argument against the notion of volition in the context of Cartesian dualism. As part of his attempt to demolish the Cartesian doctrine of the mind, Ryle tackles each of its three alleged functions, namely thinking, feeling, and willing. His arguments attacking the idea of will may be summarized as follows. First, according to Ryle, most people cannot recollect or adequately account for their acts of "willing;" second, a person can never witness the volitions of anyone else and testify to their existence; third, the connection between volition and action is admittedly a mystery that is neither solved nor soluble; fourth, voluntary physical actions must be triggered by certain mental acts, which in turn must be initiated by prior acts, and so on ad infinitum (Ryle, 1949/1973, pp. 63–66). Speaking with "deliberate abusiveness," Ryle derides the Cartesian notion of human agency as "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" (p. 17) and dismisses volitions as "occult inner thrusts of actions" (p. 66).

These objections are not too difficult to deal with. First, the inability of people to recollect or account for their acts of willing is no reason to deny their occurrence. Second, although public observability has proven to be a highly useful criterion for ensuring the validity of propositions in natural sciences, insistence on its application rules out pain, dreams, intentions, and other such psychological phenomena as legitimate topics of inquiry. Imposing such a limit on psychological knowledge is to strangle it to near death. The expulsion of subjectivity from psychology in the name of public observability not only robs human beings of their most essential feature, but also deprives psychology of one of its most challenging and interesting areas of study. Third, the connection between volition and action is a mystery only in the dichotomous ontology of the Cartesian variety, not in many other world-views. Popper's model of the three worlds (Popper & Eccles, 1977), for instance, is designed specifically to demystify the mind–body relationship. Similarly, the Sāṅkhya concepts of *suttvu, rajas and tamas* allow for the intangible and subtle sattvu to interact with the tangible and gross body, creating no mystification of the mind–body relationship.[12] Fourth, the infinite regress that results from trying to trace an act of volition that triggers a given volition is not a difficulty peculiar to the problem of agency alone; it is equally applicable to causality. If we can spare the

scientist from the ordeal of having to explain the entire chain of causality from the putative beginning of the universe-or Aristotle's prime mover- is it fair to force the humanist to run the gauntlet?

I would like to clarify here that the above points are raised as objections to Ryle's categorical denial of volition, not in defense of Cartesian dualism. I am sympathetic to the view that the terms "mind" and "matter" are a part of a Wittgensteinian "language game" we invent to speak of certain issues in our lives, and this particular language game has generated more problems than it has solved. To put it in constructionist terms, the Cartesian way of "world-making" is not a satisfactory one. But the inadequacy of a conceptual model does not prove that the problems it tries to address are necessarily pseudoproblems. To dismiss human agency due to the faults in the Cartesian model is to throw out the baby with the bath water.

Hume: Questioning the Efficacy of Causality and Volition

As noted in the first chapter, and again in the second, Hume questioned the basis for assuming a "necessary connexion" between any two events across time: cause and effect, intention and action, action and its consequence- whether reward or punishment, just or unjust. While the lack of assured connection between intention and action throws out the concept of self-as-agent and therefore personhood, the ideas of morality and justice go out of the window unless one assumes a connection between action and its consequence. Hume's (1739/1978) insistence that the maxim that every event must have a cause is "utterly incapable of demonstrative proof" (pp. 78–79) precipitated a major crisis in Western thought.

As noted by Bunge (1959/1979, p. 49, Hume's celebrated critique of causal efficacy is based on certain basic assumptions of empiricism: that experience, meaning sense impressions, is the *only* criterion in validating propositions; that sense impressions are momentary, i.e., unrelated to either past or future; and that every event is a fresh entity, and therefore neither could the past affect the way things are now nor could my current intentions and designs really affect those of the future. One of the different forms of Humean influence is seen in the work of the physicist Ernst Mach (1893), who followed the Humean idea of the sensory origins of knowledge, and went ahead to assert that "Nature is *composed* of sensations as its elements" (p. 482; emphasis added). This view clearly extends Humean epistemology to a "phenomenalist" ontology, and concludes that the "things" we see in nature are but abstractions. Mach (1893) extends this line of reasoning further to state that "There is no cause or effect in nature; ... nature simply *is*" (p. 483, emphasis original). The lawful "determination" of events means nothing more than the sense in which an angle of a triangle is determined by the other two angles, i.e., it can be *calculated* on their basis. Although few scientists and philosophers agreed with Mach's phenomenalist ontology, many

followed him in considering causal determination to be no more than the "functional" interdependence of values in an equation. Once a stable pattern of relationship among events is described in terms of a mathematical equation, we can "predict" events in the sense of being able to calculate the values of terms representing them on the basis of the known magnitudes of the other terms.

The positivist philosopher Moritz Schlick (1932/1949) affirmed the same view when he stated that "Determination ... means Possibility of Calculation, and *nothing else*. It *does* not mean that C[ause] in some magic way *produces* E[ffect]" (p. 525; emphasis original). Insofar as we are able to represent the interdependence of events in terms of a mathematical function, a set of values representing future events can be calculated or "determined" in terms of another set representing present events, and vice versa. This implies that the present can be said to be determined by future events ("teleology") as much as the present in determining the future ("causality"). Says Schlick (1932/1949): "After we have learned from science what the word determination really stands for, we know that this distinction between teleological and causal determination breaks down" (p. 527). Indeed, a similar approach has led to the argument that a missile that can hit a moving target by "anticipation," i.e., by calculation of the future position of its target, is said to be purposive or teleological (Rosenbluth, Wiener, & Bigelow, 1943).

During the days of World War 11, when Rosenbluth and others were making such arguments, missiles and robots were in a relatively primitive stage. Equipped with the advanced techniques for monitoring the surrounding conditions and for high-speed computing, robots of the 1990s can precisely calculate the trajectory of a moving target. Even as a hunting animal runs toward an anticipated, rather than the actual, position of its prey, a guided missile can keep track of the changing pattern of the target's motion and strike it with great speed and accuracy. Human-made automatons are thus becoming increasingly similar to animals, and indeed to human beings themselves. As the present situation is brought increasingly under the control of anticipated events as opposed to those of the past, the distinction between teleology and mechanism, or final and efficient causes, is becoming increasingly blurred.

The science of control and communication in machines and organisms, or cybernetics, is now well advanced, leading to a sophisticated understanding of the self-regulation of automatons and organisms. Piaget is among the many psychologists who are trying to help understand highly complex and intelligent behavior in cybernetic terminology. The rapidly developing fields of cognitive science and artificial intelligence are further narrowing the gap between human beings and machines. Does this mean that we no longer need to make a distinction between human agency and robotic self-regulation? Is volitional control of behavior a mere illusion? It seems to me that robots must be viewed in different terms from human beings as long as the former are heavily dependent on being programmed from an outside agency. It is crucial to make a distinction between being controlled

from the *outside* versus *inside,* i.e., between what Immanuel Kant called heteronomy and autonomy, respectively, and this is the topic to which we now turn.

Immanuel Kant: A Rationalist View of Causality and Volition

Kant clearly saw that Hume's arguments simultaneously undermined Newtonian science and Christian morality, and set out to rescue both. Kant agreed with Hume that causality or necessity cannot be established on empirical grounds, but he tried to justify them on rational grounds. According to Kant, "cause" is not a matter of power inherent in events to produce specific results, but a category of the understanding, or a way in which reason makes sense of the relationship among events. As well, necessity is not a matter of command given to nature, but a demand placed on us by reason. The human mind is universally structured to view events in terms of a priori categories such as necessity versus contingency, and that is the way it is.

Whether or not Kant's Herculean efforts did save science from collapse is not the issue for us to discuss here. With reference to the topic under discussion, we need to note that Kant also tried to provide a rational basis for ethics, and in this connection he had to deal with the issue of freedom versus determinism. Even as Kant insisted that we must grant the continued existence and sameness of the self-as-knower or else deny the very possibility of knowledge, he also pointed out that the thought of "ought" implies the thought of "can," i.e., freedom to choose and ability to produce actions. In other words, it makes no sense to say that one "ought" to be doing this or that unless one could in fact have chosen that specific course of action among several available alternatives. There is no point in blaming someone for an action that was forced by external factors, whether they be forces of nature, biological drives, or commands from God or a social authority. If moral credit or blame is to make sense at all, an "inner" force free to act in particular ways notwithstanding "outer" forces to the contrary must be assumed to exist and be effective. This inner force was the *autonomous* "will" as opposed to *heteronomous* or external coercive factors such as efficient causes of nature, divine dispensations, or "Providence."

Committed to a causally determined world of science, Kant could not admit to an autonomous will that was free to act as it pleased, imposing a course of action in a world governed by the universal laws of nature. An autonomous will must be capable of spontaneously initiating a course of action in the empirical world in which, according to Newton's law of inertia, nothing could move without being moved. How could the will intervene in the middle of tightly controlled causal chains of events working on a predictable temporal series of events extending from past to future? Human actions, insofar as they belong to the phenomenal world of space, time, and mass, would have to be predictable according to nature's timetable. Would not spontaneous human action introduce new, unpredictable elements

in the causally determined world? As remarked by Lewis Beck (1960), "This requires us to accept a secularized version of the classical theological quandary of man's freedom and God's foresight, and it seems no more intelligible in structure and equitable in outcome than that hoary mystery" (p. 192). How did Kant solve the dilemma?

Kant's conceptualization of freedom and will is highly complex and, as pointed out by several critics (e.g., Jones, 1969, Vol. 4, pp. 84–90;Beck, 1960, pp. 176-208), ambiguous and equivocal. It is neither necessary nor possible to review it here; only some of its features need to be pointed out insofar as they enable us to understand and compare some of the contemporary views of human agency and their parallels in Indian thought.

Kant made a fundamental distinction between the *noumenal* self operating in the timeless world of transcendental dialectics and universal reason, as opposed to the *empirical* self, meaning the person who sensually experiences objects in the phenomenal world and deals with them at the practical level. Equipped with the capacity for pure, dialectical reasoning, the noumenal self spontaneously generates ideas for action and the practical reason translates the idea into a command expressed in the form of a moral law. Indeed, Kant conceives of the will in two levels: "Wille" at the noumenal, pure level, and a separate "Willkür" at the practical level. Critics seem to agree that Kant vacillates between the two levels, creating ambiguities in his formulation. Indeed, Kant himself was not convinced of the adequacy of his attempt at reconciling freedom with determinism. In *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals,* Kant (1785/1909) says "But Reason would overstep all its bounds if it undertook to *explain how* pure reason can be practical, which would be exactly the same problem as to explain *how freedom is possible"* (p. 79; emphasis original).

With this somber note in mind, it is better not to try to pursue Kant's ideas at a greater length, but turn instead to their implications for modern psychology. There are at least two prominent psychologists who have followed some of Kant's key conceptions in their work, namely Piaget (1966) and Kohlberg (1981). In an atmosphere dominated by the behaviorist neglect of moral behavior, Piaget and Kohlberg's theories of moral development stand out in strong relief. They clearly take human beings to be moral agents and investigate the *development* of moral reasoning and moral behavior from childhood to maturity. Of the two, Kohlberg repeatedly acknowledges his position as following from that of Kant and a Kantian moral philosopher, Rawls (1971).[13] In Piaget's prolific writings, one finds numerous references expressing points of selective agreement with Kant, as well as those of strong disagreement. In regard to views of moral behavior, however, Piaget seems to agree more than disagree with Kant. In Piaget, as in Kant, the essence of being moral is to be autonomous, to follow the dictates of one's dialectical reasoning about principles that state how one ought to behave under given circumstances. Parallel to Kant's "categorical imperative," there is em-

phasis in both Piaget's and Kohlberg's view of morality on being guided by ostensibly universal principles such as the value of human life. In Piagetian as well as Kohlbergian views of moral development, in the earliest and most "primitive" level of morality behavior is guided by what is pleasurable to the fledgling ego; this is followed by a second, "heteronomous" level where one's ideas of proper behavior are determined by external sources — parents' opinion or established law and so on; and in the third, advanced level one follows universal moral principles regardless of the consequences, pleasant or unpleasant.

The Piaget–Kohlberg view of moral development stands in sharp contrast to the behaviorist view. While the former implies the Kantian notion of the power of reason to overcome the force of passions, the behaviorists, by and large, have implied the supremacy of reward and punishments, echoing the Humean view of reason as the slave of passions. Although explicit talk of human agency is rare in Piaget and Kohlberg's writings, both human freedom and autonomy are obviously implicit. Explicit treatment of human agency is gradually beginning to be introduced in contemporary psychology in the work of Rychlak (1979, 1990), Harré (1983), and Westcott (1988), among others. The strongest voices in favor of human freedom in the modem times that have been influencing psychology are clearly those of the existential philosophers, particularly Heidegger and Sartre.

The Existentialist Position: On Choosing One's Possibilities for the Future

The central issue for Martin Heidegger was human existence or Being, an issue discussed by Western philosophers since the time of Plato. Dissatisfied with the available perspectives on it, and keen to convey his distinctive view of what it means to be a human being, Heidegger coined the term *Dasein,* literally meaning "being there." Most translators have retained the term in order not to distort the special connotations that Heidegger attached to it. In *Being and Time,* Heidegger (1927/1962) explains the term while unfolding his complex viewpoint "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence," says Heidegger, "in terms of a possibility of itself; to be itself or not itself. Dasein has either chosen the possibilities itself, or grown up in them already" (p. 33). Further, he insists that "[o]nly the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold or by neglecting" (p. 33). Thus, anticipating alternative possibilities for one's future and having to choose among them are an inalienable feature of human beings. We are, in other words, agents more than anything else.

Each and every *Dasein* finds itself "thrown" by accident of birth into a particular set of conditions that "had been" in the past, something over which one just cannot have any control. From the time of birth onward, parents and other caregivers determine many things about children- by what name they shall be called, where they would "belong," and what they might have in store for the

future: having or not having siblings, having an education, making a living, and so on. It is usually the other people, the "they," that guide us to our futures. Nevertheless, we do have a fundamental choice: we could either choose to be guided by the "they," or weigh among alternatives available at a given time and make choices on our own terms. According to Heidegger, to be guided by the "they" is to be unauthentic, while making one's own choices is to be authentic. Heidegger obviously places high value on authenticity; being unauthentic is considered simply dreadful. This value is shared widely in North American sociology and psychology under alternative labels, such as the value of inner- as opposed to other-directedness in David Riesman's (1950) sociology, or of independence as opposed to conformity or obedience in the social psychology of, respectively, Solomon Asch (1951) and Stanley Milgram (1974). It should be clear that all these conceptual variations imply what Kantians would call autonomy and agency.

Turning again to Heidegger, we may note that according to his perspective, there is something inevitable in everyone's future: death- the ultimate nonbeing of every being. With death, all the social relationships in terms of which one may have defined who one is and one's relationship with everything that one has learned to care for must come to an end. Nobody but the particular *Dasein* itself must face this part of future. As a popular folk saying in India puts it, "one is born alone, and must die alone." Nevertheless, human life is always forward-looking, "living-ahead-of-itself." One is always working toward an anticipated outcome "for-the-sake-of-which" one undertakes this that or the other course of action (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 236). Thus, in Heidegger's views one hears the echo of Aristotle's "final cause." Clearly, Heidegger and his followers have tried to restore human agency long under attack by the likes of Hume, LaMettrie, and Skinner.

Jean-Paul Sartre was arguably the strongest advocate of the voluntarist position presented by the existentialist philosophers. In *Being and Nothingness,* Sartre (1943/1966) forcefully suggests that not only do we have freedom to choose, but are condemned to choose whether we like it or not:

> Thus there are no *accidents* in life; a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this war is *my* war; it is in my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion; these ultimate possibles are those which must always be present for us.... For lack of getting out of it, I have *chosen* it. This can be due to inertia, to cowardice in the face of public opinion, or because I prefer certain other values to the value of refusal to join in the war (the good opinion of my relatives, the honor of my family, etc.). Any way you look at it, it is a matter of a choice. (p. 708; emphasis original)

Once a person realizes that one could sign out of the game of life and avoid all possible outcomes, good or bad, by committing suicide, one must also realize that one has continued to live by choice. Not doing anything is also a matter of choice, if only be default. It is interesting that Sartre uses a first-person form in saying the above; it is only a personal stance that can forcefully and authentically bring forth

the point he is trying to make. No amount of impersonal analysis can bring home the point that I find myself required to choose a particular course of action.

It is also interesting that Sartre uses conscription into a war as the scenario, a scenario he and his World War II generation knew firsthand. There is an amazing parallel between Sartre and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in that both use the battlefield as the backdrop to illustrate the importance of having to make choices in life. Standing in the middle of armies poised for battle, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he cannot just stand there doing nothing. "Not even for a moment can one stay without engaging in action; one is helpless about having to do one's karma ..." *(Bhagavad-Gītā,* 3.5; translation by A. C. Paranjpe). Both *Gītā* and Sartre express a common paradox: one always has a *choice,* which one *must* exercise.

The Polarization of Views on Free Will in Modern Western Thought

The nature and degree of polarization of opinion on the free will–determinism issue in modem Western thought should be clear against the backdrop of the above discussion. Sartre and Skinner clearly stand at opposite poles on this issue. While Skinner admits no freedom and proclaims 100% environmental determinism, Sartre insists that at no moment are we without freedom of choice. There is a long history of a dialectic of ideas that has gradually led to the polarization in its current form. In the early days of modem psychology, William James (1884/1948, p. 40) coined the term "hard determinism" to designate a position that assumes a total or 100% determinism. As noted, Popper (1966) and many others have shown that hard determinism is an untenable position. At the opposite end of the spectrum, it is obviously equally untenable to assume that there is 100% freedom, or that "we are perpetually engaged in our choice and perpetually conscious of the fact that we ourselves can abruptly invert this choice" as J.-P. Sartre (1943/1966, p. 598) put it. There are many who take a position somewhere in between the two extremes; there are innumerable shades of what James (1884/1948, p. 40) called "soft determinism," which somehow reconciles degrees of freedom with degrees of determinism. This does not mean that those who adopt a soft-determinist or "compatibilist" position have satisfactorily resolved the paradox. The conclusion, according to Richard Taylor (1967), is that "whether determinism is true or of whether men have free will is no longer regarded as a simple or even philosophically sophisticated question ... Concealed in it is a vast array of more fundamental questions, the answers to which are largely unknown" (p. 373).

Psychologists cannot wait, nor have they been waiting, for a satisfactory answer to the free will–determinism issue. During the heyday of behaviorism, the overall trend was to stay close to determinism. Although several humanistic and existentially oriented psychologists have been upholding voluntaristic positions in various forms, they have not been in the academic "mainstream." However, through the 1970s and 1980s, several psychologists have advanced a

more or less explicit treatment of human agency and autonomy. Together, they are bringing about what Brian Little (1987, p. 230) has called a "conative revolution." It would be useful to take a brief overview of the recent resurgence of conative concepts.

THE CONATIVE REVOLUTION: THE OPEN ADVOCACY AND TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF HUMAN AGENCY IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY

In a series of publications starting in the late 1960s, Joseph Rychlak (1968, 1979, 1981, 1990) has been strongly and persistently advocating a teleological approach to psychology. He strongly criticizes Skinner's deterministic and mechanistic view of human beings and advocates a psychology of "rigorous humanism" (Rychlak, 1977). Unlike the Rogerian and Maslowian varieties of humanistic psychology, Rychlak's humanism involves meticulous arguments grounded in historically informed ideas of causality, ontology, and epistemology.14 He argues, for instance, that Skinner's views implicitly accept only efficient causes, and traces the roots of such exclusive emphasis to Francis Bacon's rejection of Aristotelian final cause and to the empiricist epistemology of Locke and Hume. Noting that fear of anthropomorphism has, among other things, historically contributed to the denial of purposiveness of human behavior, Rychlak points out the ludicrousness in trying to avoid an anthropomorphic account of the anthropos. According to Rychlak, what empowers human beings to exercise free will is their capacity to construe alternative possibilities for future outcomes and to attach differential values to the alternatives by weighing them in the light of dialectical reasoning. In his more recent work, Rychlak (1990) tries to show "why computers do not have free will in spite of the famous Rosenbluth, Wiener, and Bigelow (1943) argument that free will is negative feedback" (personal communication).

Romano Harré is another equally strong advocate of human agency in contemporary psychology, although his line of argument is quite different from Rychlak's. In The *Explanation of Social Behaviour,* Harré and Secord (1972) note that the mechanistic concept of behavior that is common in contemporary psychology is based on the traditional concept of science, where "action was supposed to be impressed upon passive things, which merely passed it on" (p. 67). They suggest that this view needs to be revised in the light of the modem concept of cause that "developed in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, under the pressure of discoveries of electrical phenomena, and the critical philosophy of physics developed by I. Kant and R. J. Boscovich" (pp. 67–68). According to the latter conception, "[a]ction is to be treated as the realization of a potentiality created in space in the neighborhood of active things" (p. 68). Such potentiality implies the capability or *power* of things and individuals to produce "a certain action either of itself or upon another thing, in virtue of its nature." Harré and Secord give the examples of things which possess power conceived in this sense: the chemical composition of an explosive and the electron structure of an atom.

This view of things and individuals provides the basis of Harré's, more recent, in-depth analysis of human agency.

In *Personal Being,* Harré, (1983, Ch. 6) makes a clear distinction between patients and agents. Patients are beings that remain unchanged and quiescent unless forced to change by external stimuli; they have passive dispositions or "liabilities." By contrast, agents are beings with intrinsic or acquired "powers," or active tendencies that can produce changes in themselves or in other things upon removal of restraints. Harré, is keen not to introduce in his conceptual scheme any form of mysterious force such as "psychic energy" or "force of intention" to justify the elimination of the reference to "I" as the active agent (1983, p. 192). Indeed, he appears to make a concerted effort toward developing a model that is consistent with the latest developments in physics, biology, cybernetics, and artificial intelligence. Apart from Rychlak and Harré, there are several others, such as Albert Bandura (1982), who have begun to explicitly accommodate the concept of agency in their work. In my view, among these, Harré, and Rychlak's approaches are the most philosophically sophisticated. In addition, a tacit acceptance of agency is reflected in a wide array of recent writings in cognitive and personality psychology. Let me illustrate how so.

In Chapter 4, we considered Hazel Markus's conceptualization of the self as having cognitive as well as affective and conative aspects. Unlike the common conceptualization of the self as a relatively static cognitive structure, she views it as a malleable structure as well as a dynamic process that continually monitors the current situation and construes possibilities for the future. It is the individual's capacity to construe possible future selves and to assess their affective quality that allows him or her to steer ongoing activity toward desirable goals. Markus and Ruvolo (1989) have tried to explain how the capacity for anticipation of events and the construal of possible selves culminates in a program of action for the self-system. "We suggest," say Markus and Ruvolo (1989), "that possible selves are the cognitive/affective elements that *incite* and *direct* one's self-relevant actions (p. 217; emphasis added). In other words, future selves indicate outcomes "for the sake of which" a course of action is initiated.

It should now be clear that these researchers are trying to rehabilitate Aristotle's much-discredited final causes without fussing over terminology or causing philosophical furor. Markus and Ruvolo (1989, pp. 212–213) list several recently formulated concepts that connect self-concept with agentic action: current concerns (Klinger, 1975); life themes (Schank & Abelson, 1977); personal goals (Staub, 1980); personal projects (Little, 1983); personal strivings (Emmons, 1986); psychological careers (Raynor & McFarlin, 1986); and life tasks (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987). This list should affirm Brian Little's claim (mentioned before) that a "conative revolution" is in fact under way in contemporary psychology. Little's own work provides a good illustration of the kind of work in the mainstream of psychology that affirms human agency.

Little (1983, p. 276) proposes the concept of a *personal project,* which is

defined as "a set of interrelated acts extending over time, which is intended to maintain or attain a state of affairs *foreseen* by the individual (emphasis added). He has developed a simple device to help explore the nature of the personal projects that people tend to undertake in various stages of their lives. It simply involves a formatted sheet of paper on which subjects are asked to list the various "personal projects," or sets of activities they may be thinking of undertaking over the following day, week, year, or other desired period, and to rate each project on a variety of dimensions: its perceived degree of difficulty, importance, expected outcome, positive or negative impact, the degree to which it might be congruent with one's own values and self-identity, and so on. People mention all sorts of projects, ranging from simple short activities like mailing a postcard, through more engaging ones like completing a college education, to long-range and highly ambitious ones like "eradicating cancer from the face of the earth." If we ask a person why she would undertake a project such as obtaining a degree, she might identify a higher-order goal set up for a more distant future: obtaining a PhD, for instance. If we continue probing with successive "whys," a person may identify successively higher-order ends: landing a job, pursuing a career, and becoming happy, perhaps. Little (1987) suggests that such a probe tends to produce a *terminal account,* i.e., "an account which does not require an additional reason for its being undertaken (equivalent to a Rokeachean terminal value)" (pp. 240–241) (see Rokeach, 1973, 1979). This last point is interesting in connecting the concepts of causes, reasons, and values. It suggests that, whatever might be the efficient causes that energize action, human behavior is guided by rules such as "do not steal," and also by values, such as those of happiness, love, or some such thing worth living for. Little's work on "personal projects" illustrated recent development of conceptual frameworks and investigative techniques useful and necessary for fathoming the complexities of the agentic aspect of human beings.

Looking back on the selective historical account, it should be clear that the history of the concepts of causality and intentional action has been closely intertwined in the history of thought. The modern phase of this history has seen a polarization in thinking about human agency, with deep divisions that have most clearly affected contemporary psychology. As we shall soon see, this particular course of the history of ideas is specific to the Western world. What the history of Indian thought has to offer on this topic is quite different.

Karma and Determinism in the Traditional Indian Worldview

As Kalidas Bhattacharyya (1960) clearly and repeatedly (1967) pointed out, "the problem of freedom of will has never been systematically discussed in the history of Indian philosophy" (1967, p. 315). Unlike in the West, where the debate between voluntarists and determinists has continued for centuries, the Indian

worldview did not see a split between the advocates of "Autonomous Man *[sic]" versus* the defenders of "Plastic Man." It is widely recognized that in Indian thought, the Law of Karma became a basic and common assumption covering lawfulness within the material as well as the moral domains. As noted in Chapter 2, it is accepted almost universally in Indian thought. Contrary to a common misunderstanding, the Law of Karma does not imply any kind of fatalism. It is basically a principle that assumes lawfulness and order in the physical, biological, mental, and moral realms. As noted by Hiriyanna (1952), "the karma doctrine is grounded in a moral view of the universe, ... freedom is not only compatible with, but is actually *demanded* by it" (p. 32, emphasis added). While freedom is always implicit in the concept of *karma,* some authors have spelled it out clearly and emphatically. Śaṅkara (1980,1.1.2.2), for instance, states that, in regard to most worldly actions *(laukika karma),* persons are free to act one way or another, or not to act at all, if they so choose. For instance, he says, a person could choose to walk, ride, proceed otherwise, or decide not to move at all.[15] Śaṅkara extends such freedom beyond the domain of ordinary daily activities *(laukika karma)* to actions enjoined by the scriptures *(vaidika karma),* thereby clarifying that freedom to choose alternative courses of action extends to moral as well as nonmoral spheres.

When Śaṅkara affirms the human freedom to choose among alternate courses of action, he does not imply unlimited freedom. He clearly asserts that a person is not wholly independent or completely free to do what he or she wishes; a variety of conditions in space, time, and causality must be met in order to produce an intended result.[16] Śaṅkara (1980,2.3.14.37) gives the example of a cook, who must depend on water, fuel, and a variety of ingredients to produce a desired recipe. Regardless of having to depend on various accessories, the cook nevertheless is (at least partly) responsible for the good, bad, or indifferent results. In giving the example of the cook who must depend on the capacity of fuel to heat the ingredients of a recipe to obtain the desired result, Śaṅkara alludes to the need for a collaboration of final and efficient causes in the successful execution of human actions. However, the typical Indian perspective on the relationship between the moral and material domains to which the final and efficient causes belong is considerably different from that in the West. The differences between the Indian and Western worldviews in this regard demand an in-depth understanding and careful interpretation of each worldview in the light of the other. During the past few years, a considerable amount of work has been done in North America in trying to interpret the doctrine of karma in the context of the Western worldview. Thanks to the efforts made and inspiration provided by the philosopher Karl H. Potter, several workshops were held and volumes were published on the doctrine of karma in North America in the past two decades (O'Flaherty, 1980; Keyes & Valentine Daniel, 1983; Neufeldt, 1986). In the following sections of this chapter, I shall be guided mainly by the work of Karl Potter (1964,1967,1980) and Wilhelm Halbfass (1980, 1991a).

In previous chapters, the doctrine of karma was mentioned several times. First, in Chapter 2, we noted how the idea of an individual's responsibility for his or her actions is shaped by the doctrine of karma in the tradition of the Indian concept of social ethos, or *dharma.* Then again in Chapter 3, we saw how the Law of Karma is an integral part of Śaṅkara's system of the Advaita Vedānta. The basic *ethical* implications of the Law of Karma follow from the assumption that good actions lead to desirable consequences, and vice versa. Perhaps the earliest succinct statement of this idea is found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (4.2.5): "The doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil ... what action *(karma)* [a person] performs, that he procures for himself"(see R. E. Hume's translation, 1931, p. 140; emphasis original). The spirit of these words is not much different from the Biblical assertion "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians, 6.7). However, in Indian thought, the metaphor of seeds sown by actions is taken more seriously, and is applied to the plant and animal kingdoms, as well as to the psychic and moral domains. Moreover, the doctrine of karma suggests a natural and inevitable *causal* connection between actions and their consequences.

In a single long essay (1991a),[17] Halbfass has shown how the nature of karmic causality is conceived of in different ways by the various schools of the Upanisadic, Jain, and Buddhist traditions. In his view, the concept of karma has different applications in different contexts. He identifies at least three basically different functions and dimensions of the concept of karma. "[K]arma is," says Halbfass (1991a): "(1) a principle of causal explanation (of factual occurrences); (2) a guideline of ethical orientation; (3) the counterpart and stepping-stone of final liberation" (p. 295). From the vantage point of the psychology of action, all such considerations are important in their own right. It seems to me that by comparison to Western thought, in the Indian tradition the ethical orientation and concern for final liberation from the chain of action and its consequences has an upper hand, and causal explanations of factual occurrences have a secondary place. In Aristotelian terms, final cause explanations of human behavior are placed first and explanations in terms of material, efficient, and formal causes are subordinated. Such prioritization stands in sharp contrast with Western views in general and Skinner's approach in particular. Exclusive reliance on efficient causes, as with Skinner, implies fully mechanistic explanations of human behavior; it means that freedom of will and personhood are denied, and moral issues go begging. In Indian thought, by and large, personhood, free will, and the just world hypothesis are taken for granted, and concepts of causality and broad worldviews are devised in accordance with these basic ideas. Contrasting approaches to the relationship between morality and causality in Indian and Western thought have radically different implications for psychologies developed within their respective frameworks. Since the views of the Advaita Vedānta have already been presented, let me present the views of the Mīmāṃsā Vaiśeṣika, and Yoga. I am choosing these

because they emphasize various aspects and implications of human action in varied contexts: in regard to religious prescriptions and in respect of events in the physical, biological, and psychological domains.

THE POTENCY OF RELIGIOUS RITUALS ACCORDING TO THE SYSTEM OF MĪMĀṂSĀ

As pointed out by Halbfass (1991a), the ritualistic religion of the ancient Vedas understood *karma* or action primarily in terms of the performance of rituals enjoined by the Vedic texts. The system of Mimamsa was primarily aimed at the delineation of the precise meaning of prescribed actions through Vedic exegesis. Apart from the regular or daily rites *(nitya karma),* such as the prayers at dawn and dusk, that have been considered mandatory according to the Vedic religion, there were optional sacrificial rituals aimed at attaining various desired results *(kamya karma).* While some of the intended results involved mundane things such as obtaining cattle or having a rain fall, others involved otherworldly gains, such as stay in heaven *(svarga).* For otherworldly gains, one would of course have to wait until after death, but the mundane results could not be attained instantaneously either. For instance, a crime such as homicide was almost surely to be punished here on earth, but the punishment might follow in a matter of days or even years rather than immediately after the act of killing. To help make sense of the delay in the consequences of action within the lifetime of a person as well as thereafter, it was thought that good as well as bad actions generate a certain storable "power" *(śakri)* that lies dormant for extended periods of time before bringing about an appropriate result. Followers of the Mīmāṁsā system coined the term *apūrva* (literally meaning unprecedented) to designate the consequences of actions of remote past that have no immediately preceding cause. For want of an apparent cause in the immediate past, the current events are attributed to the force of an invisible power that makes the good or bad consequences of intended actions appear at some later date.

From the viewpoint of the Mīmāṁsā system, the act of initiating the sacrificial rituals had the potency to generate an appropriately beneficial storable power. According to Halbfass (1991a):

> In Mīmāṁsā only the *utsarga,* the official act of initiating the sacrifice, has to be done by the sacrificer; the actual performances themselves may be left to "paid agents." Although Kumarila maintains that the soul (ātman) of the sacrificer is the subject or the "doer" of the sacrificial action, the question of personal authorship and responsibility is less important here: what produces apurva is rather the impersonal power of the sacrifice itself, which is only unleashed, activated during the actual performance of the sacrifice. (p. 309; emphasis original)

In the Mīmāṁsā system, the concept of *apūrva* was often considered as some kind of a magical quality without any substratum *(anāsrita).* The overall interest in this

system would thus seem to be in acquiring magical powers rather than in accounting for causality or ensuring justice. Although there was belief in the existence of a soul that would proceed to heaven or hell *(svarga* or *naraka)* as appropriate after the death of the body, there seemed little interest in specifying where the powers generated by the soul's actions might reside and how they might result in good or bad experiences. Several thinkers of the rival systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, however, believed in the storing of the powers generated by actions, but reconceptualized it within a different model of nature and the cosmos.

Action and Its Consequences in the Physical and Biological Context: Views of the Vaiśeṣika System

The Vaiśesika system radically redefined karma in terms of motion. Indeed, this system is probably the most naturalistic of all the systems of Indian thought. In The *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus,* Brajendranath Seal (n.d./1985) gives a clear account of the Vaiśeṣika view of motion. As pointed out by him, Praśasta pāda (5th century), one of the early Vaiśeṣika thinkers, defined karma as the unconditional cause of the change of the position of a particle (p. 129). Praśasta pāda considers in some detail the nature of rectilinear, curvilinear, and vibratory motion of objects. He distinguishes among different causes of motion, such as gravity *(gurutva),* which is the cause of falling bodies, fluidity *(dravatva),* which makes liquids flow, and motion caused by volition, such as an object falling due to an intentional push by hand. He distinguishes motion caused by these three types of causes from that resulting from a fourth cause that he calls the "unseen" *(adṛṣta),* since it cannot be ascertained by observation or inference as the others are. The following are given as examples of motion caused by the "unseen" cause: the first motion of particles at the beginning of creation, the movement of iron toward a magnet, the movement of particles from the root to the stem of a plant by capillary action (called the *abhisarpaṇa),* and the upward motion of particles due to evaporation. Seal (n.d./1985) notes the following additional category of motion attributed to the operation of the "unseen":

> The operation of merit and demerit (dharma and adharma), a transcendental cause, which has to be posited in explaining the conjunctions and disjunctions of souls with their organic vehicles (bodies), which cannot be ascribed to natural causes, but [is] presupposed[d by] the law of Karma, or the operation of moral causation, as superimposed on the natural order. (p. 133)

Halbfass (1991a) notes that in classical Vaiśeṣika doctrines of Praśastapāda, the "unseen" or *adṛṣṭa* is a comprehensive term such that under its mantle, merit and demerit *(dharma* and *adharma)* are but 2 of the 24 qualities *(guṇa)* of various substances *(padārtha).* "The integration of dharma and adharma into the list of gunas is a symptomatic step," says Halbfass, "in the process of the final systematization of Vaiśesika and in its attempted merger of soteriology and 'physics' " (p.

311). He also points out that in the Nyāya system, which is usually considered to be the twin of Vaiśeṣika, atoms *(aṇu)* as well as minds *(manus)* are conceived of as having a kinetic force attributed to the "unseen." It is interesting to note that in the Vaiśeṣika system of Prasastapada this force is categorized into various kinds including continuous pressure *(nodana),* impact *(abhighāta)*, and persistent tendency, which is called *saṁskāra* (Seal, n.d./1985, pp. 134–136). As we shall see, the idea of *saṁskāra* is central to the Yogic conception of the connection between actions and their future consequences.

The attempt by the Vaiśesika school to include physical phenomena such as motion under the mantle of the Law of Karma shows that there was a strong tendency to conceive of retributive justice as a cosmic principle conceived in a thoroughly naturalistic sense. Their approach implied several presuppositions: The first one may be called the "conservation of karma," meaning that there is neither disappearance of the effects of any action *(krtavipraṇāśa)*, nor any appearance of undeserved suffering or well-being *(akṛtābhyāgama).* This, in turn, implies the second presupposition that there is no interference in the distribution of rewards and punishments by a supernatural agency such as God who could grant amnesty to the wicked or bestow grace on undeserving devotees. As noted in Chapter 2, the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (6.11) viewed God as merely an overseer of the Law of Karma without the power to interfere in its operation. The third presupposition is that the Law of Karma should be applicable to all creatures in the universe as suggested in the Sanskrit expression "from Brahmā to the tufts of grass" *(brahmādistambaparyanta).* As noted by Halbfass (1991a), extending the Law of Karma to the entire domain of living beings required the recognition of awareness among all forms of life, since retribution for good or bad actions cannot take place unless a creature can feel pain and pleasure in one form or another. The similarity between human beings and animals in feeling pleasure and pain seemed obvious to ancient Indians as it does to many of us today; comparisons between human beings and animals are commonplace in Sanskrit writings on diverse topics such as dramatics where emotions among human beings and animals are compared, or in Yoga where the training of the human mind is compared with teaching animals by rewarding them. Moreover, the conceptualization of the entire animal kingdom in a graded series of varied forms of life has been an integral part of the traditional Indian worldview.

The idea of hierarchical grading of varied forms of life appears in Indian thought in many different ways. For instance, according to a highly popular myth, Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the world in the Hindu "trinity," appeared on earth in a series of incarnations in the form of a fish, a turtle, a boar, a lion-headed man, and a dwarf, before appearing as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa as near-perfect and perfect manifestations of the spirit *(puruṣa)*, respectively. The lining up of species in this myth is suggestive of a hierarchy of life forms with an uncanny similarity with the Darwinian order of evolution. There is also a popular conception of a hierarchy of

8.4 million species and a connected assumption that a living being must ascend this ladder before being born as a human being. Such an "evolutionary" concept of the origins of humanity is integrally connected with the notion of retributive justice built into the cosmos. It is a common belief, for instance, that once an individual form of life ascends the evolutionary ladder and incarnates in the form of a human being, it is up to him or her to progress morally and spiritually so as to be rewarded with increasingly privileged forms of human and even superhuman lives, until finally qualifying for an ultimate release from the cycle of birth and death. If, however, after being born as a human being one fails to accumulate enough merit to qualify for being reborn as a human being, one is supposed to be "demoted" to lower forms of life, such as a cat, or a dog, or an insect, depending on how poorly one has conducted one's life. Once reborn into a lower form, there is no alternative but to wait until nature takes its course in upgrading the individual to successively higher forms until human form is regained. This endless game of snakes and ladders is believed to perpetuate unless one attains enlightenment, and thus escapes the drudgery once and for all.

But how far down the scale of life does the ladder extend? Surely to cows and dogs and turtles and fish, and even maggots. But how about the proverbial "blade of grass?" Are plants, too, part of the hierarchy of life forms? As noted by Halbfass (1991a, p. 323), the "five-fire doctrine" *(pañcāgnividyā)* that appears in the *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad (5.3–10) suggests a link between human beings and plants. According to this doctrine, the subtle body of a deceased person is first transformed into *soma* (juice of the Soma plant), which then transforms successively into rain, food, semen, and a human being. The *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad (1931, 5.10.1–6) describes how the subtle body of a meritorious person first ascends to the moon, where as *soma,* it becomes food for the gods:

> After having remained in it as long as there is a residue [of their good works], then by that course by which they came they return again, just as they came, into space; from space, into wind. After having become wind, one becomes smoke. After having become smoke, he becomes mist. After having become mist, he becomes cloud. After having become cloud, he rains down. They are born here as rice and barley, as herbs and trees, as sesame plants and beans. Thence, verily, indeed, it is difficult to emerge; for only if some one or other eats him as food and emits him as semen, does he develop further. (p. 233)

All this is as mysterious and fanciful as any other doctrine of life after death, whether in Indian thought or anywhere else. Yet, when compared with the supernaturalistic views of the Mīmāṁsā system, which speaks of ascending to heaven by means of magical powers whether earned by meritorious behavior or bought by paying a priest to conduct some rituals, the Upaniṣadic speculations just mentioned approach the issue of karma in a relatively naturalistic way, opening the way for an even more naturalistic approach of the Vaiśeṣika system.

As Halbfass points out, in the history of Indian thought, there have been

persistent, unresolved controversies over such issues as the relation between karma and events in nature. For example, the Vaisesikas and the Jains could not agree on whether plants were conscious. There were even "experiments" to find out if maggots arose in a human corpse sealed in an iron pot, for if they did, life would be shown to arise spontaneously without a soul entering into the sealed box to face punishments for past actions. Halbfass (1991a) notes several other instances of naturalistic observation and even "experiment," but concludes that over the centuries, there was an increasingly "rigid superimposition of religious and soteriological schemes and perspectives upon biological, zoological, and cosmological observations and a gradual evaporation of the spirit of observation and empirical openness for natural phenomena" (p. 320). At any rate, it should be clear that, regardless of all of its shortcomings, the general thrust of the Indian world-view was to consider the doctrine of karma as a broad principle that encompasses concepts of retributive justice as well as causality that are evenly applicable to all human affairs on the one hand and to events in the realms of meteorology, biology, and even physics on the other. Of all the varied systems of Indian thought, Patañjali's Yoga (1978) comes the closest in accounting for human behavior in "psychological" terms, and as such it deserves special attention here.

The Conception of Karma and its Consequences in the Yoga System

It has been common in Indian thought to characterize human action in terms of its physical *(kāyika),* verbal *(vācika),* and mental *(mānasika)* dimensions. According to Patañjali's Yoga (1978), all mental events or processes *(citta vṛrti)* such as perceiving, thinking, imagining, recollecting, and so on constitute action, or karma. Each mental event is said to leave behind traces, called *saṁskāras*, which are compared to seeds. The mind *(citta)* is thought of as a receptacle in which the karmic seeds are stored for indefinite periods of time. At some later time, when proper conditions are present, the stored seeds germinate and bear fruit *(phala)* that display the distinctive mark *(añjana)* of the original actions that produced them. For instance, if the original action involved reaching out for and tasting honey, the fruition of the seeds sown by this karma might happen while visiting the forest where it was tasted, and might involve the pleasant taste of honey as well as a tendency to seek a beehive where honey might be found. On the contrary, if the original experience involved a painful contact with fire, the fruition of its traces would invoke a fearful feeling at the sight of something that looks like a flame, along with behavioral impulses to get away from it. What such examples suggest is that present behavior is determined by past experience and behavior, depending on the pleasant or unpleasant nature of the initial experiences. The basic purpose here is clearly to connect experiences and behaviors across a time span, which is what concepts such as imprints and memory "traces" accomplish in

contemporary thought. The Yogic concept of *karmāśaya* helps to do the same by invoking the metaphor of storage and retrieval of past impressions. Here the term *āśaya* meaning a vessel, receptacle, storehouse, a resting place, or a seat, is combined with the term *karma.* Thus, the term *karmāśaya* implies a storehouse of the karmic residues, and this storehouse is considered to serve as a resting place for the soul *(puruṣa).* Dasgupta (1924/1973) mentions yet another meaning of the term *āśaya* as a vehicle, suggesting that karmasaya is so called because it serves as the vehicle in which the person travels through the time tunnel, witnessing light and dark, heat or cold, pleasure or pain, in a perpetual succession of life cycles.[18]

It is easy to see that the Yogic concept of *saṁskāras* resembles the contemporary Western notion of *traces,* and the Yogic view of the way they operate resembles the behaviorist notion of *reinforcement,* insofar as both recognize the role of pleasure and pain in the shaping of future behavior. Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (1978, 4.9) clearly attribute remembering to the reactivation of traces of events experienced earlier during the present life cycle. Moreover, Yogic theory, like modem psychology, recognizes that insofar as even newborn babies tend to avoid pain and seek pleasurable things, the origin of behavioral tendencies must be traced to events that may have occurred prior to the beginning of the present life cycle. Like the behaviorist notion of *drive,* the Yogic notion of *vāsanā* traces the origin of current behavioral tendencies to the history of the individual prior to conception. As noted, the ancient Indian thinkers, too, thought that animal and human forms of life were connected, except that they did not think of a phylogenetic order within a Darwinian model of evolution as we do in modem times. In the Yogic theory, as in the case of the traditional Indian view of karma, the human tendency to protect one's home territory from intruders was not so much of a carryover from the animal origins of human species, but rather the fructification *(vipāka)* of the seeds sown by an individual's experience in a previous incarnation as a dog. The seeds sown by experiences in a given life cycle may or may not sprout and bear fruit before the end of that life cycle; the unsprouted seeds are carried forward from the end of one life cycle to the beginning of the next. According to the Patañjali (1978, 2.13), the type of seeds that lay in store at the time of death decides the type of species *(jāti)* in which the individual will be reborn, the type of life cycle *(āyus)* he or she will have, and the kind of pleasurable and painful experiences *(bhoga)* he or she will enjoy and suffer.

The foregoing account of pleasure and pain is largely naturalistic; it simply relates to the experiential concomitants of behaviors of animals including human beings, and all behaviors are considered lawfully determined. In some basic ways, such an account is fairly consistent with behaviorist views. However, the Yogic perspective is radically different from that of the behaviorists in that the former combines retributive justice with the law of nature. In Patañjali's (1978, 2.14) view, an individual experiences pleasure or pain depending on whether he or she has accumulated residues of virtuous or vicious actions *(puṇyāpuṇya hetutvāt),* re-

spectively. Patañjali's commentator Vyāsa (4.8) clarifies that whether an individual will be reborn as a hell-born *(nāraka),* as an animal *(tiryak),* or as a human being *(manusya)* depends on the kind of unripened karmic seeds that await fructification *(vipāka)* in the next life. Thus, according to the Yogic worldview, individuals are promoted or demoted for their good and bad deeds by being "naturally" placed higher or lower on a hierarchical order of species. This is of course in line with the views of retributive justice shared by other systems of Indian thought as described earlier.

As we noted in the previous chapter, the primary strategy of Patañjali's Yoga is controlling one's own thought processes by means of persistent effort *(abhyāsa)* and the cultivation of dispassionateness *(vairāgya).* While the former means (effort) clearly lie in the domain of the self-as-agent, the latter fits within the sphere of the self-as-enjoyer. What Yoga expects the aspirant to do is to turn the self-as-agent against itself by slowing itself down physically and mentally until it comes to a stand still, and simultaneously get the self-as-enjoyer to withdraw from the very objects that it persistently continues to seek. This is the Yogic strategy for ending the self-perpetuating cycle of action and its consequences. But why does the cycle of action and its consequences tend to perpetuate itself? Seen from a Yogic viewpoint, the primary cause of perpetuation are the following "afflictions" that most commonly taint mental events: (1) misconstrued notions about one's selfhood- mainly mistaking transitory thoughts for the unchanging Self- *(avidyā);* (2) egoism *(asmitā);* (3) attachment *(rāga);* (4) aversion *(dveṣa);* and (5) love for life and the tendency toward the perpetuation of life *(abhiniveśa).* Thus, it is the feelings of attachment or liking for various objects and the dislike or fear for others that are primarily responsible for leaving traces behind, traces that prompt a person to seek liked things and avoid the disliked ones.

To put it in the language of freedom versus control, a person's behavior is "controlled" by past events as long as she or he remains enchanted by things enjoyed in the past and keeps avoiding unpleasant ones. A lover would surely chase his paramour as long as the love lasts; but if the relationship goes sour or if the man becomes infatuated by a different flame, then even the strongest attachment for the first love would quickly become a thing of the past. Likewise, if and when a utopian ideologist becomes disillusioned about the party's promises for a bright future, yesterday's dream can turn into today's nightmare. Against this background, it should be easy to understand why the cultivation of dispassionateness would mitigate the spell of past experience on the individual. Dispassionateness implies the diminution or blunting of the force with which one is attracted to or repelled from objects in the world. According to Yoga, as in many other forms of spiritual self-discipline, one's emotional investment can be voluntarily altered. If this is correct, then it should follow that lowering the levels of attachment would allow a person to exercise systematic control on one's own behavior.

The overall thrust of the Yogic strategy is to develop increasing levels of self-

control. The initial steps to Yoga, namely, restraints such as avoiding stealing or injury and observances such as cleanliness and study, involve control of one's general conduct in social life such as not hurting others and in matters of personal conduct in daily activities (see Table 5.2 in the previous chapter). Then, the Yogic aspirant learns to slow down the body and sit comfortably, then to slow down the physiological functions through the control of breathing. Then follows control and gradual slowing down of one's thinking and cognitive processes. When the stream of thought is brought close to a standstill, the nature of conscious experience is said to undergo a radical change. Vācaśpati Misra and Vijñāna Bhikṣu's commentaries on Patañjali Yoga aphorisms provide detailed descriptions of a series of altered states of consciousness called the *samādhi* that are said to follow in sequential order with progress in the practice of meditation (see Paranjpe, 1984). We shall look at some aspects of the altered states of consciousness as described in Yoga in the next chapter. Here, let us note the implications for the chain of action and its consequences as relevant to the topic at hand.

According to Patañjali (1978), the experience of the initial levels of *samādhi* also leave their traces behind, and one who experiences them tends to seek more of the same since the experience is positive. However, unlike the pleasurable experiences of external objects or events, such as tasting honey, or winning a game, and so on, which generally tend to add fuel to the fire of desires and turn one's attention outward rather than inward, the *samādhi* experience prompts the Yogi to look inward for satisfaction. The very nature of the *samādhi* experience is said to be intrinsically blissful; it inheres in the Self (as-subject) and is independent of any object. That bliss is inexhaustible and it is always there to be experienced without one's having to depend on vagaries of the external world. Moreover, according to Patañjali (1978, 1.50), traces left behind by *samādhi* experiences impede the force of traces left behind by external objects. As the traces left behind by samadhi experiences accumulate, they strengthen the tendencies to seek inner bliss while at the same time they weaken the tendencies to seek objects of pleasure in the external world. Thus, a "positive cycle" sets in, whereby the Yogi becomes increasingly free from the binding spell of the "contingencies of reinforcement" that normally tend to impel a person to seek or avoid objects and events. Because this cycle is the opposite of the self-perpetuating chain of action and its consequences, it ultimately liberates a person from the burden of the past.

Karma Yoga: The Method of Nonattached Action in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*

In the Indian tradition, it is customary to think of three distinct "paths" to liberation: the paths of knowledge, devotion, and action *(jñāna, bhakti,* and *karma mārga)*. The three paths involve the transformation of the self as knower, enjoyer-sufferer, and agent, respectively, and require focus on cognition, emotion, and

action, respectively. We have considered the first two in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, and we may now consider the path of action *(karma mārga)* as appropriate to the topic of this chapter. The nature of the path of action is often understood differently because the ambiguous meaning of the term karma. The narrower connotation of the term karma implies actions as prescribed by the earlier Vedic texts, meaning rituals aimed primarily at securing a place in the heaven. It is in this sense of the term that the system of Mīmāṁsā is sometimes viewed as espousing the path of action; it engages in the exegesis of the earlier Vedic texts, and tries to clarify the meanings of Vedic injunctions so as to enable its followers to engage in prescribed actions. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* however, the broader ethical connotation of the term karma is emphasized, and Karma Yoga is suggested as a path of action involving a skill in carrying out one's actions *(karmasu kauśalam).* The skill lies primarily in cultivating a sense of detachment in regard to the outcomes of action, whether a gain or loss. In the remainder of this section, I wish to discuss the rationale of nonattached action *(niṣkāma karma)* as a technique of self-transformation leading to liberation from the chain of actions and their consequences.

The Bhagavad-Gītā describes more than a dozen approaches to liberation, each called a "yoga." Of these many yogas, the Yoga of renunciation of action *(karma samnyāsa yoga)* recommends disengaging from actions in family and community life, and thus contrasts sharply with Karma Yoga, which recommends active engagement as opposed to renunciation. In the Indian tradition, disengagement or renunciation *(nivṛtti)* and active engagement with social roles in family and community *(pravṛtti)* have been proposed as alternative ways of dealing with action in life. Disengagement implies resigning from roles and responsibilities in family, kin, and community and accepting the life of a renouncer *(saṁnyāsin)* and being a recluse, a hermit, an anchorless ascetic, or a wandering monk devoted to study, contemplation, and teaching. Such a role is sanctioned in the Indian culture, and there are institutional arrangements to support them in a manner comparable to those of monks in hermitages in the West. Renunciation implies that one stops acting in the varied roles within the family and community, and thus is freed from the chain of consequences following from all the actions that would otherwise be carried out in those capacities. Such disengagement would be a way to liberation, since no actions means having no consequences and therefore no bondage, thereby moving toward liberation. But nonaction is merely a logical possibility and not a practical one, since even the hermit must act in one way or another as long as he or she lives. Therefore, even a renouncer needs a strategy to act in a way to attain release from the chain of action and its consequences.

Traditionally, the lifestyle of a renouncer has been considered appropriate for those who take the path of knowledge *(Jñana Yoga)* to liberation, since the renunciate can afford full-time devotion to the task of study and contemplation. There are of course stalwarts such as Sankara who strongly advocate knowledge as the only means to liberation, and within its context dismiss the role of action as a

subsidiary at best. Many others recommend a combination of knowledge, devotion, and action depending on what suits a particular individual's temperament *(svabhāva)* and circumstances in life. Against this background, Niṣkāma Karma Yoga (often simply called Karma Yoga) provides an approach with the strongest emphasis on action, and relatively less on devotion and knowledge as preferred by the aspirant. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is probably the best source for the explanation of Karma Yoga, and B. G. Tilak is clearly one of its staunchest advocates and defenders in modem times. My account of the rationale of Karma Yoga in the following pages depends heavily on the *Gītā* and on *Bhagavad-Gītā-Rahusya,* which is the name of Tilak's commentary on the *Gītā* (Tilak, 1915/1971).

The rationale of Karma Yoga as expounded in the *Gītā* rests primarily on the idea that it is the hankering *(saṅga, āsakti)* for rewards or the fruits of action that "binds" us to the chain of actions and their consequences. The stronger the longing for specific outcomes, the greater the effort a person is ready to invest in attaining them; and the greater the effort, the higher the chances of being drawn into unintended results and their consequences. On the contrary, if one does not care for any results at all, then one is not likely to do anything. However, it is not possible to live without doing anything at all, and it makes little sense to act without any expectation at all, since complete lack of expectation would simply mean totally random or mindless activity. Moreover, most aspirants for liberation are likely to find themselves strongly involved at least in some personal projects that are important in their lives. Against this background, the strategy of Karma Yoga is to start cultivating affective neutrality, i.e., to start trying not to get very excited about what one might gain or lose as result of intended actions. Affective neutrality makes a good deal of practical sense, since effective action requires an optimum level of concern for success; both very high or very low levels of concern are detrimental to success. However, the aim of Karma Yoga is not simply to foster higher levels of efficiency by performing at optimum levels of involvement and anxiety; its ultimate aim is to continue performing one's duties with an increasing sense of detachment so that one stops being driven by the outcome of one's actions and ultimately escapes from the chain of action and its consequences. To that end, it requires an understanding of the nature of action and its consequences in addition to the deliberate and systematic lessening of one's emotional investment in the outcome of action.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (18.14) provides such an understanding through a careful analysis of the various factors that determine success in a course of action and helps promote self-understanding in relation to action. As noted in the previous chapter, it points out that the agent is but one of several factors in producing an outcome and identifies four other factors involved, namely the context of action, the instruments of various sorts, various kinds of effort, and finally, chance or "fate" *(daiva).*[19] It also points out *(Bhagavad-Gītā,* 3.27) that events in the phenomenal world *(Prakṛti)* keep happening according to the inexorable laws of

nature over which we have no control, and yet we think egotistically and assign more credit or blame to ourselves for success and failure than we deserve.[20] This idea is essentially the same as A. G. Greenwald's (1980) notion of "beneffectance," i.e., a tendency to take credit for success regardless of whether one deserves it or not, which was discussed in Chapter 4. The difference is that, unlike Greenwald who refrains from drawing moralistic conclusions from his observations, Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna in the *Gītā* (2.47) to stop being attached to the fruits of action. For, he says, it is only your own actions over which you have control, never the outcomes; so let not the fruits be your motive for action, nor let yourself slither into inaction.[21]

Tilak (1915/1971) tried to explain and popularize the doctrines of nonattached action as expounded in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* during the early years of the 20th century. A journalist trying hard to raise his voice against a foreign rule during the heyday of the British empire, he tried to convey to his countrymen that the message of the teaching of the *Gītā* was not one of renunciation, but of being involved in the practical affairs of the society. Such involvement was obviously relevant to the fight against a foreign rule, even as Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to Arjuna was in the war of his times. Aside from the political implications for the teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to Tilak's life and times, his interpretation brings out the relevance of detached action for any person in any culture and era. Karma Yoga as expounded in the *Gītā* may be viewed as a "technology of the self," with a focus on action, although the role of emotion and cognition in it is not negligible. The key to success in the practice of Karma Yoga is in the cultivation of affective neutrality through cognitive means, such as understanding the role of egotistic tendencies in assigning undeserved credit for success or blame for failure. Tilak's particular interpretation of the doctrines of the *Gītā* has been criticized on various grounds: for his overemphasis on action to the relative neglect of knowledge as a means to liberation and for implying that his approach was consistent with that of Śaṅkara, who advocated knowledge as the only means to liberation. It is also suggested that the very idea of detachment is inconsistent with the focus on action, since it makes little sense to undertake a course of action without any expectation of specific outcomes.

Adoption of the nonattached stance implies letting things happen and being a witness to the course of events without at the same time foregoing meaningful action. With the cultivation of such a stance, a person can learn to be guided not by egoistic goals, but by the value of service to society *(loka-saṁgraha),* as suggested by the *Gītā* A person who successfully practices nonattached karma is said to become gradually released from the egoistic strivings that tie the agent to the chain of consequences and ultimately to become released from its fetters. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (5.10) uses the metaphor of the lotus leaf that floats in water but remains untouched by it to describe a person who lives in the sea of social action without getting entangled by its trappings.

Understanding the Doctrine of Karma in View of Contemporary Indian Concerns and Western Perspectives

The doctrine of karma has provided the foundation for the social ethos in India for ages. As noted, except for a very small minority of the .materialist followers of Cārvāka the doctrine of karma has been accepted by almost all schools of thought and religious denominations that originated in India. The pervasiveness of the teaching of this doctrine does not imply that vast numbers of people in the Indian subcontinent have been seriously practicing the preaching based on such principles. In current times, in particular, there are several issues and concerns that question and undermine people's belief in the doctrine of karma. While secularization and popularity of the worldview of science tends to weaken faith in "religious" beliefs, widespread corruption and social malaise directly challenge belief in a just world ensconced in any worldview, secular or religious. A more serious challenge to the belief in the doctrine of karma arises from the reaction of the members of the lower castes, who had long reconciled themselves to their inferior status as a just result from their alleged demerit acquired in previous lives. As noted in Chapter 2, such justification is no longer acceptable in light of the currently popular value of egalitarian beliefs. Indeed, seen from the vantage point of the members of the lower castes, such an interpretation of the doctrine of karma is a device used by the upper castes, especially the Brahmins, to gain undue advantages at the cost of the lower castes. This issue of the clash between egalitarianism versus the caste system supported by the doctrine of karma deserves closer examination. To that end, let me cite some data from a survey of attitudes and beliefs regarding the doctrine of karma among members of different caste groups.

The study in question aimed at assessing the attitudes and opinions of members of various caste groups about a variety of issues concerning the caste system. It was conducted in the Western city of Pune in the mid-1960s (see Paranjpe, 1970), and the participants were some 500 college students. To help assess the significance of the hierarchical distribution of status and privileges across the caste groups, about one third of the respondents were drawn from each of the Brahmin, Maratha, and Harijan (ex-untouchables, currently called Dalit) caste groups placed at the top, the middle, and the bottom of the caste hierarchy, respectively. The following was one of the statements to which the students were asked to express their agreement or disagreement: "It is proper to bear without complaining our current miseries as rightful dues for our deeds in previous life." It should be clear that such an attitude is a corollary of the doctrine of karma, and that its acceptance by members of the underprivileged castes is essential for the perpetuation of the caste system. In response to this statement, about 30% of students of the privileged Brahmin castes agreed, while almost 50% disagreed, and the rest were neutral. By comparison, only 17% of members of the ex-untouchable

castes agreed while 60% disagreed with the same statement. In an effort to assess their level of support to the doctrine of rebirth, students were asked to express their agreement or disagreement to the statement "I believe in the doctrine of rebirth." About 35% Brahmins expressed belief in the doctrine of rebirth, and a little less than 30% rejected the idea. By comparison, while 13% of the ex-untouchable castes expressed their belief in the idea or rebirth, over 60% expressed disbelief. Predictably, members of the Maratha caste in the middle of the caste hierarchy were in between the upper and lower castes in their level of disagreement with these statements (see Paranjpe, 1970, pp. 51–53).These data clearly indicate that among the youth studied, by and large, disbelief in the doctrine of karma was more common than belief, and that such disbelief was more common among members of the lower castes than among those of the higher castes. The limitations of these data are obvious: they are restricted to a sample of college youth and may not be generalizable to the wider society. Also, these observations are fairly outdated. I have not been able to obtain more recent and more representative data on such issues. However, given that the reaction of the underprivileged castes against the differentials is steadily increasing over the decades as indicated by the substantial political gains of parties supported by Dalits and "other backward castes," it would be fair to guess that belief in the doctrine of karma, which tended to justify the privileges, would also be on the decline.

Be that as it may, it should be clear that the doctrine of karma and the corollary belief in reincarnation are inextricably connected with the desire to see the world as a just place. Belief in rebirth is necessary to protect the just world hypothesis implicit in the doctrine of karma, just as belief in the Day of Judgment is necessary to ensure belief in a similar hypothesis within the Christian worldview. However, since the doctrine of karma and the belief in rebirth have been used to justify social inequities of the caste system, this doctrine and belief have come to signify injustice, which is ironically the exact opposite of what they were originally supposed to stand for. This does not mean that the doctrine of karma and the belief in rebirth necessarily entail the justification of inequality. Indeed, Gautama Buddha as well as several other religious reformers such as Guru Nanak rejected caste-based inequities without discarding either the Law of Karma or the belief in rebirth. Ironically, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the greatest leader of the Dalit community and the strongest fighter for equality, converted millions of his followers to Buddhism, which has always accepted the doctrine of karma as an integral part of its worldview. In his book, *Buddha and His Dhamma,* Ambedkar (1957/1992, pp. 329–344) explains what the Buddha meant when he spoke of rebirth and karma, and shows how the Buddhist views differed from the Brahmanical views of karma. He also tries to interpret Buddha's views of rebirth and karma in the light of the modern scientific conceptions of heredity and environment as determinants of human behavior. It is not necessary for us to examine how well the traditional perspectives are interpreted in Dr. Ambedkar's writings and how he interprets

them in the light of modem science. Suffice it to note that in his view, "[t]he basis of the Hindu doctrine of past karma as the regulator of future life is an iniquitous doctrine.. .. The only purpose one can think of [for it] is to enable the state or the society to escape responsibility for the condition of the poor and the lowly" (p. 344). It hardly would be surprising that Dr. Ambedkar's neo-Budhhist[22] followers strongly endorse the principle of equality while at the same time rejecting the doctrine of karma altogether.

In his autobiographical account previously mentioned, S. K. Thorat (1979), a follower of Dr. Ambedkar, notes that he rejected the stigmatized identity as a Mahar, i.e., a member of a caste formerly considered untouchable, and asserts that "I accept the principles of social justice, equality, fraternity, and the like" (p. 78). These principles are the watchwords of the modern liberal democratic ethos reverberating around the world since the late 18th century, thanks to the legacy of the French Revolution. It is hardly surprising that they express the sentiments of people who have been victimized by inequalitarian systems anywhere and everywhere in the world today. Following his just-quoted words, Thorat (1979) adds: "I reject belief in the *karma* theory based on past deeds, reincarnation of souls, in Gods and rituals" (p. 78; emphasis original). The point is that, given the centrality of the principle of equality in today's world, including contemporary India, the doctrine of karma may no longer continue to be a central feature of the Indian worldview and the backbone of its social ethos as it had been throughout history.

The assumption that the world is a just place makes little if any sense to the countless dispossessed, victimized, and exploited people of the world. Indeed, for many such people, the world *is* an unjust place. Moreover, in India today as in certain other parts of the world where corruption has become the order of the day, the very concept of justice starts to lose sense. It is of course possible to make sense of life without belief in the just world hypothesis. There are many varied worldviews that are neutral to moral considerations; the worldview of science is an obvious and common one. Given the increasing spread of education and the steady march of science and technology, it is conceivable that the worldview of science might come to dominate and be widely shared in India, and perhaps in the rest of the world as well. Moreover, within academe, the worldview of science has ostensibly already become the order of the day.

The Doctrine of Karma from the Vantage Point of the Worldview of Science

There is an ironic similarity between the worldview of science and the traditional Indian worldview: Both assume that all events in the entire universe are governed by ironclad laws of causality. Moreover, the traditional Indian worldview conceives of a continuum of life forms that function within a universal order similar to the Darwinian notion of the evolutionary order. The main differ-

ence is that in the Indian worldview causality extends beyond the natural world to the moral domain. Such mixing up ofthe natural and moral domains is clearly an anathema to the worldview of science. It is my impression that there are two distinctive aspects of the development of the worldview of science in the West, whereby the gulfbetween the natural and moral domains has grown very wide. The first one is that, in the intellectual history ofthe West, God was considered to be the guardian of moral order, an idea common and central to Judaism, Christianity, as well as Islam. It was He who would punish the sinners and reward the meritorious on the Great Day. The fact that science developed in 16th- and 17th-century Europe in the teeth of opposition from the Church seems to me to be' at least partly responsible for the rift between not only science and religion, but also between science and ethics. Second, since the 18th century when David Hume drew a sharp line between the "is" and the "ought," it has been supposed that science will deal exclusively with facts and have nothing at all to do with values.

When modem science emerged in Europe during the 17th century, its views on various matters such as the sun rather than the earth as the center of the world conflicted with the established Christian worldview, and the conflict was epitomized by the inquisition of Galileo (see Russell, 1935/1961).This conflict continued until the middle of the 19th century when Darwin proposed the evolutionary origins of human beings, a theory that challenged the biblical view of the creation of man by God. As debates over evolutionism versus creationism continue on university campuses, at least in North America, scientists by and large wish to have nothing to do with religion. Insofar as the Church often claims to have authority over moral issues, next to God, scientists tend to keep away from discussions of ethics and value as well. Besides, ever since science started to receive funding from royalty (as in the case of support to the Royal Society of London founded in 1662), scientists were supposed to refrain from participation in politics. Later, when science started to receive funding from democratically elected governments, it made even less sense for scientists to support one political ideology or religious sect over another. Publicly funded educational instutution understandably tend to be value neutral, since no matter what values you support, they often tend to please some groups but offend others.

Looking at the issue of the relationship between science and religion in the global context, it is necessary to note that the conflict between them is a product of the specific features of intellectual history of Europe, which are not obtained in the East. Two major themes of the worldview of science that are at the center of its conflict with the Church, namely the heliocentric view of the universe and the theory of evolution, do not militate against the worldviews of Eastern religions. As far as I know, the introduction of science in Asia has not been offensive to any established sensibilities. It is difficult to convey to many Westerners the simple fact that classical Buddhism and Jainism are atheistic, since from their viewpoint, atheist religion is an oxymoron. Even some Hindus are aghast when they discover

that some of the influential philosophical systems, such as the Sāṅkhya system, which dominates the conceptual framework of the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* has no place for God. Even in Advaita Vedānta, which is not explicitly atheistic, the role of God is limited to that of a mere purveyor of the moral order with no power to intervene. In most Indian systems of thought, God plays a limited, if any, role; He does not dictate moral law, or sit in judgment, or dispense rewards and punishments. The Law of Karma is believed to keep order in the moral domain without any help from God or without any interference from Him.

I know of no Sanskrit expression of which the "Law of Karma" is an exact translation; the term "law" has been added in the English translation of the term "karma," which in and of itself conveys the notion of lawfulness in the moral domain. In one of his early papers, Karl H. Potter (1964) referred to karma as a "naturalistic principle," and explained which of the different meanings of the English word "law" were applicable in its context. In the context of the doctrine of karma, he explained, the term "law" does *not* imply either a prescriptive principle or a rule of conduct, nor does it mean an empirical generalization such as Newton's law or Boyle's law in the natural sciences. Potter (1964) points out, correctly in my opinion, that the Law of Karma is a principle like the "Law of Causation," or better still a "hypothesis," such as "every event has a cause." Unlike an empirical hypothesis, which is in principle falsifiable, its "apparent falsifications are disallowed in principle" (p. 39).

Contemporary psychology tends to favor a Newtonian conception of causality and lawfulness as a matter of empirical generalization, rather than a Kantian notion of causality as an *a priori* principle. Newton's laws lend themselves to empirical verification on the basis of repeatable observations; they are statable as universal generalizations to which exceptions are virtually nonexistent. Apples keep falling to the ground rather than flying in the air, and when claims suggestive of exceptions are made, such as Yogic claims about levitation, then an attempt is made to falsify the claim rather than question the principle. It is fairly safe to predict that the next apple that will ripen on the apple tree in my yard will necessarily fall to the ground as the hundreds I have seen, hundreds of thousands that others have seen, and the zillions that are presumed to have fallen throughout history, However, as Hume pointed out, empirical generalizations about natural phenomena such as falling apples cannot be guaranteed to perpetuate forever. Necessity, like the concept of causality itself, is not given in experience; it is added by the mind that expects that regularities observed in the past will persist in the future. Halbfass (1991) has pointed out that karma is a principle of causal explanation in the Kantian sense, i.e., as "Erklären" or as "derivation from a principle which one must be able to comprehend and state clearly" (pp. 295-296). The notions such as "every action has its inevitable consequences," or that "nobody suffers except for one's own bad deeds" that are implicit in the Law of Karma are clearly principles that help make sense of order in the moral domain, just as

principles of causality and necessity are principles that help make sense of the course of events in nature.

Symbolic Worlds and the Is–Ought Distinction

In Chapter 1, we briefly encountered Peter L. Berger's concept of the symbolic worlds: the abstract cosmic conceptions of reality within which our social, religious, and scientific views of the world are ensconced. The Law of Karma is a crucial aspect of the symbolic world shared by a vast majority of Indians throughout the millennia. It attempts to cover everything everywhere and at all times: all kinds of events in the physical, biological, mental, and moral domains. In pre-Enlightenment Europe, God's law was believed to apply to the natural as well as the moral spheres. Isaac Newton thought that he was discovering the laws that God had laid down for everything in Nature. Somewhere around the 17th through the 19th centuries, however, in the Western tradition, the domains of the natural and the supernatural, of science and theology, of facts and values, started to be sharply defined as separate. As noted, the Law of Karma does not entail any supernaturalism; indeed, it is a fiercely naturalistic principle that works without the interference of God. It is my impression that joining the natural and moral order into a single grand order militates against the worldview of science. The basic issue here is the distinction between the "is" and "ought," fact and value.

Ever since Hume (1739/1978, p. 469) made a clear-cut distinction between the domains of the "is" versus the "ought," we have tended to make an equally sharp division between the descriptive and prescriptive laws. Philosophers may still dispute the exact nature, meaning, and legitimacy of the is–ought distinction,[23] but many of us take the division for granted. Seen from this post-Humean vantage point, the Indian conception of karma would seem to hopelessly mix the "is" with the "ought." Trying to deduce conditions about how the world putatively is from how we think it ought to be constitutes, we are told, the naturalistic fallacy, which of course is a pitfall to be avoided at any cost.

If the Law of Karma were to operate as it is supposed to, then life in some form must continue after death; as noted, rebirth is not just a corollary but a necessary corollary of the Law of Karma. But is there any evidence to support the belief in reincarnation? Over the past several years, Ian Stevenson (1975) has been searching for empirical evidence for reincarnation by investigating numerous reported cases of such. Regardless of the numerous methodological problems in collecting information and validating claims in such matters, there are two strikes against such an endeavor that tend to dismiss the whole idea. First, the very concept of reincarnation is an anathema in terms of the contemporary worldview of science, and on that basis the issue is a nonstarter. Second, the idea of doing research in such a field is taboo to the extent that, like people doing research in parapsychology, anyone doing research in this field is assigned to a position of an

outcast even beyond the fringe. Third, even if one were to set aside the taboos that tend to dismiss the very idea of reincarnation, the kind of information that one comes across in the putative cases of reincamation as presented by Stevenson and other researchers in the field tends to be anecdotal and may not be admissible as evidence in accordance with contemporary scientific standards. But how about the question of evidence for the belief in reincarnation within the Indian tradition?

Interestingly, so far I have not come across any discussion of evidence supporting the idea of reincarnation in either traditional or contemporary writings on the Law of Karma. Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's aphorisms (2.12-14), which is one of the sources that offers detailed discussion of the concept of reincarnation, makes a tangential reference about the sources of evidence on such matters in his comments on the universal tendency to cling to life and the fear of death manifest among living beings. The fear of death, in particular, Vyāsa (2.9) suggests, cannot be attributed to knowledge gained either through direct perception *(pratyakṣa),* or inference *(anumāna),* or the testimony of the scriptures *(āgama).* The reasoning behind this suggestion should be clear. It makes no sense to imagine that a living being could have ever had the direct experience of dying-unless he or she is assumed to have lived and died prior to being reborn. Of course it may be granted that one who has seen others dying could *infer* that she or he, too, will die one day, and view that as a fearful prospect. One could also say that those who believe in scriptures may understand what it means to die, since God or angels whose words appear in the Scriptures may be assumed to know the meaning of death. However, fear of death must be inborn rather than inferred or learned, for it is not simply grown-ups who have thought about the possibility of one's own death, or learned persons who have read and believed in scriptures, who are afraid of death; even babies as well as lowly organisms seem to be afraid of dying. Thus, argues Vyāsa, the only way to make sense of the universality of the fear of death is to grant that all organisms must have experienced death sometime before birth. As can be seen, this argument incidentally offers a typically deductive proof of the idea of reincarnation. Such discussion of the evidence supporting the idea of reincarnation is rare in the history of Indian thought.[24] Given that the major schools (and even their minor branches) have not only discussed the criteria of validation of knowledge claims, but have often engaged in fierce debates over the issue of evidence *(pramāṇa carcā),* how does one make sense of the lack of attention to the problem of evidence regarding reincarnation? My guess is that the belief in reincarnation has been a cardinal assumption of the Indian tradition; it is so central and so much taken for granted that even raising the issue of evidence probably seemed quite unthinkable.

With this issue we come to the upper limit of the gulf between the traditional Indian and modem scientific worldviews. While the traditional Indian worldview tries to bring the "is" and the "ought" under a single mantle, the symbolic world of modem science insists on keeping them separate. In the Indian worldview the

assumption of a just world as it "ought" to be is taken for granted, and elaborate conceptions of nature are fashioned to suit the just world hypothesis. In sharp contrast, in the worldview of science, attention is focused on describing how the world "is," and issues of how things ought to be are often subordinated to the task of observation and analysis of facts. Yet, the advocates of applied science wish to use the knowledge of facts to bring the present state of the world closer to the way it "ought" to be. Psychologists committed to "science" not only try to avoid discussion of issues about values, ethics, and ideals, but also tend to marginalize the concepts of personhood, agency, character, and so on. While the public at large continues to consider human beings as persons with rights and responsibilities, psychologists go about the business of studying human behavior as if the issues of rights and responsibilities did not even exist. As Rychlak and Rychlak (1990) have pointed out, while "[t]he Law presumes that human beings have free will ... many psychiatrists and psychologists who act as expert witnesses ... have been trained to believe that human beings are without free will" (p. 3). They point out how, in regard to the issue of insanity defense where psychology's interests intersect with those of law, there is a great disparity between the assumptions of psychologists and psychiatrists on the one hand and those of lawyers and judges on the other.

Personhood, Agency, and Permanence

Before closing this chapter on self-as-agent, it is necessary to consider some issues about agency in relation to person, self, and identity. First, it may be emphasized that, as noted by Charles Taylor (1985), personhood mainly implies agency; only a human being who is guided by a purpose and is able act intentionally can be held responsible for what he or she does. Following Harry Frankfurt's (1971) seminal essay, Taylor notes that human beings are not the only ones to act purposefully or to make choices; animals too have the capacity to choose among alternatives. A rock lying at the bottom of the hill would be both unaware of the avalanche coming down the mountain and unable to move, but a fawn or a rabbit would not only recognize the danger from the falling debris but would most surely "choose" to move away from it. Even learning theorists during the heyday of behaviorism spoke of the rats in mazes making "choices," although they were keen to avoid "anthropomorphism" of all sorts and would not touch the concept of free will with a ten-foot pole. Now even robots can be trusted to make a series of intelligent choices to help manufacture a car. According to Frankfurt, what makes human beings different from animals is not the ability to make choices or that they have desires, but the ability to choose among their choices and desires. Frankfurt uses the term "second-order desires" to refer to the relative evaluation of various types of desires that human beings often make.

According to Taylor, these judgments are concerned with the qualitative

worth of different desires. Thus, I have a desire to lie down and take it easy this evening and also a desire to do some exercise to help keep myself fit. Surely I must weigh the two desires against each other, and the evaluation is clearly qualitative in nature, not quantitative. It is to indicate the qualitative distinction that ancient Greek philosophers distinguished between the pleasurable and the Good, and the *Katha* Upaniṣad (2.1–2) makes a similar distinction between *preyas* and *śreyas*. In the Western tradition, Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian conception of "hedonic calculus" (Bentham, 1780/1962) introduced the notion that desires can be distinguished simply on a quantitative basis, and many psychologists, several behaviorists among them, followed suit. The human ability to judge the qualitative worth of varied desires is a precondition for membership in a civil community guided by an ethos. In a community guided by an ethos, each individual's actions must be judged in terms of the community's shared values. Much of this is a matter of common sense; the reason why it needs to be spelled out and affirmed is that those who were trained in disciplines committed to the "Plastic Man" viewpoint seemed to simply ignore the obvious.

If Brian Little is correct in saying that a conative revolution is underway in psychology, then the dominance of the Plastic Man model is receding and the concept of the Autonomous Man is back. If this is correct, then it is time for the return to psychological studies of concepts such as purpose and agency, as well as value as a principle guiding agentic action. As noted by Little, a person's desires may be translated into a variety of "personal projects" or planned actions explicitly or implicitly guided by values and qualitative distinctions among desires. Personal projects may be as trivial as feeding a cat, as short and simple as writing a note to mother, or as ambitious and long term as obtaining a PhD, winning a gold medal in the Olympics, or becoming a prime minister of a country. Some of the ambitious projects may symbolize a person's desired "future selves," as Hazel Markus calls them. The future selves reflect a person's values, or Frankfurtian "second-order desires." According to Taylor, our fundamental evaluations, or core values, define our identity. It is in this sense that Erikson views identity and ideology as two aspects of the same entity, namely the self-in-society. A person's ideology, i.e., a set of relatively integrated core values, *define* a person; they involve principles that a person *stands for*. Imagine a young nationalist who is willing to live or die for her country. She might be equally prepared to carry out a suicidal bomb attack on the country's enemy, or to live a life dedicated to serve its poor. Or think of a scientist who dedicates decades of her or his life to exploring secrets of the galaxies or to finding a cure for cancer. Such persons are *agentic* in the fullest sense; they have defined what kind of a life is *worth* living, and they have chosen a personal project that is carried out over long periods of time. The purpose of citing such examples is not to naively sing hymns of praise for idealism; it is to bring out the fuller implications of the agentic nature of human beings.

Being agentic involves being persistent; one who desires to accomplish a

major personal project must strive to work at it until the goal is reached. Even a person who sets out to do something as simple as feeding the cat must look for the cat food in the container, scoop up a portion of the cat chow, put it in the dish, and perhaps even make a trip to the pet shop and fetch more supplies if the container is empty. In other words, even the simplest projects require us to undertake a series of meaningfully ordered steps over a period of time, and most of all, not to be distracted by anything else until the project is completed. Most people have the capacity to undertake and carry out projects that need persistence over fairly long periods of time. Obtaining an education, keeping a job, and raising children are projects that most people undertake, and these take years to complete. During the period of completion of such projects a person must set a series of goals in sequential patterns that are too familiar to need description. Throughout the period of completion of such personal projects, a person must monitor success and failure, plan and execute tasks specific to one stage, complete and wind up the current stage, and then move on to the next stage or to the next project as relevant. Each individual must be a planner, manager, and executive of his or her personal projects. Understanding of and commitment to values are necessary to provide meaning, direction, organization, and stability to our long-term projects and to guide and sustain our efforts over the long haul.

Again, all this is a matter of common sense; we do not need a psychologist or a philosopher to tell us this. But sometimes it is necessary to remind ourselves of this commonsense understanding, because we tend to take it for granted and ignore some of the logical implications of the nature of human agency. Note, for instance, some of the implications of human agency that Husserl (1933/1977, pp. 66–67) points out. While it is true that our undertakings in life require value decisions and volitional commitments that persist over time, it is also true that we may get disillusioned about our projects, give up our deepest convictions we have sustained for decades, and even undo things accomplished after a lot of effort. We cannot only go ahead with a personal project, we can also turn back in reverse. It is this ability to radically change our projects as well as values that Husserl emphasized. Indeed, there are notable instances in history of radical reversal. Paul, who was once a zealous guardian of the Jewish faith and had set out to destroy Jesus and his "heresies," experienced a radical conversion overnight. The conversion turned an archenemy of Jesus into his greatest disciple and defender. In our own times, Milovan Djilas (1973), a youthful Yugoslav revolutionary who became a high-ranking official of the Communist party, later became one of the party's staunchest critics. The point to make is not that ideological conversions occur, but that while the self-as-agent must persist over long periods of time to undertake and complete some common personal projects, there must be something in the individual that would survive the making and unmaking of the longest and most involved projects. Persons who undergo major conversions or even radical reversals have an unmistakably selfsame "I" to fall back on. There must be in all persons an unchanging

Self that lies beyond the most fickle as well as the most stubborn and lasting self-as-agent.

NOTES

1. For an account of the debate between B. F. Skinner and Carl Rogers, see Rogers and Skinner (1956) and Wann (1964). For a recent round of this debate (between W. Mischel and J. F. Rychlak), see Wandersman, Poppen, and Ricks (1976, pp. 119–170).
2. For a concise account of the historical conceptions of determinism, see R. Taylor (1967). A detailed analysis of the varied conceptions of freedom is given in Mortimore Adler's (1958) *Idea of freedom* (2 vols.). Malcolm Westcott (1988) provides a comprehensive overview of various positions on the freedom–determinism issue in contemporary psychology.
3. For various works of Aristotle, see *The Works of Aristorle* (Ross, 1952).
4. In *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* while explaining the concept of "Being-Psychology" or the "Psychology of perfection," Maslow (1971, p. 133) explicitly mentions Aristotle's ideas of causality and cites the Aristotelian metaphor of an acorn growing into an oak as an instance of the process of "Becoming," or self-actualization.
5. For an English translation, see S. Radhakrishnam (1960/1968, pp. 363–365).
6. Bacon (1860) repeats the same idea of "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed" at the beginning of his *Novum Organum,* aphorism III (Vol. 4, p. 47).
7. The public nature of scientific inquiry is consistent with the view that it involves the social construction of reality. However, it is doubtful if Bacon held a social constructionist position.
8. It is interesting that in launching such a strong attack against Aristotle's teleology, Hobbes falls back on another principle that Aristotle himself had clearly stated, namely, that "nothing moves unless moved by something else." Hobbes's (165511839) own words echoing this Peripatetic principle are: "For as it is true, that nothing is moved by itself; so it is true also that nothing is moved but by that which is already moved" (p. 412).
9. See Descartes (1641/1911,p. 267).
10. Descartes uses this metaphor in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641/1911,p. 192).
11. For Descartes's view of the role of animal spirits in mind–body interaction, see his *Passions of the Soul,* particularly, Article XXXIV (164611911, Vol. 1, p. 347).
12. I have elsewhere (in Paranjpe, 1983) discussed the similarities between the triune ontological categories of the Sāṅkhya system and the three "worlds" as construed by Karl Popper (Popper & Eccles, 1977).
13. Kohlberg (1984) says the following: "My philosophic conception of moral judgment has been based on principles of justice and has depended upon the theories of Kant and of Rawls (1971) to justify the principles of the highest stages" (p. 401).
14. I am deeply indebted to Professor Joseph Rychlak for the philosophical perspective on the historical analysis of Western ideas of causality and freedom presented in this chapter and for the valuable comments on an earlier draft.
15. In this connection, Sankara's words (1980, 1.1.2.2) are:

    kartumakartumanyathā vā kartuṁ śakyaṁ laukikaṁ vaidikaṁ ca karma, yarthāśvena gacchati, padbhyāmanyathā vā na va gacchatīti |

16. In this connection, Śaṅkara says (1980, 2.3.14.37):

    apicārthakriyāyāmapi nātyantamātmanaḥ svātantryarnasti deśakālanimittaviśeṣāpekṣatvāt |

17. This essay is a revised edition of Halbfass's earlier essay on the topic published in a book on karma edited by Wendy O'Flaherty (1980).
18. Dasgupta (1924/1973) explains this meaning of the term *āśaya* with the following expression in Sanskrit: "āśerate sāṁsārikā purushā āsmin niti āśayaḥ" (p. 103). He does not indicate its source. The use of the term *purusha* here is ambiguous, since in classical Sankhya as well as Yoga, it is not *puruṣa*, but the intellect *(buddhi)* that enjoys and suffers.
19. This is a paraphrase of the following words in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (18.14):

    ashisṭḥānaṁ tathā kartā | karṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham |
    vididhāś ca prthak ceṣṭā | daivam caivā'tra pañcamam ||

20. The words in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (3.27) are:

    prakṛteḥ kriyāmānani | guṇaiḥ karmaṇi sarvaśaḥ |
    ahaṃkāravimūḍhātmā | kartā 'hamiti manyate ||

21. This is a paraphrase of the following words in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (2.47):

    karmanyevādhikāraste | mā phaleṣu kadācana |
    mā karmaphalaheturbhūr | mā te saṁgo'stvakarmaṇi ||

22. The label neo-Buddhist *(nava-bauddha)* designates the more recent converts to Buddhism, primarily the followers of Dr. Ambedkar, as distinguished from the small minority of traditional Buddhists.
23. For a collection of papers discussing the is–oughtquestion, see W. D. Hudson (1969).
24. I am grateful to Professor Ashok Aklujkar for guiding me in the search for references in this matter.

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7

Person, Self, Identity, and Consciousness

In this last chapter, I wish to bring together some of the distinctive features of traditional Indian and Western views of person, self, and identity. The general thrust of my discussion will be to see how far their perspectives converge or diverge, how far their strengths complement one another, and whether horizons could expand via possible integration of their strong points. To help bring the issues into focus, I intend to discuss a few points again, at the risk of repetition.

Psychology is said to be the study of the experience and behavior of individuals. Regardless of the relative difference in the emphasis on rights versus duties, the idea of persons as individuals with rights and duties has been common to both Indian and Western traditions for centuries. To be held responsible, a person must have the capacity to *know* the rules of conduct in a given context, must be able to *feel* pleasure and pain, and should be able to *choose* among alternative courses of action. This implies the need for the capacities of cognition, affect, and conation. Since the European Enlightenment, this trilogy has provided the basic framework for the development of modem psychology. This view of the mind very closely corresponds with the traditional Indian view of a person as a knower, enjoyer–sufferer, and agent. This close similarity between Indian and Western concepts of personhood provides a solid basis for convergence of perspectives. It is difficult to say whether this similarity is traceable to the common roots of Indo-European languages, and it is for future research to explore the extent of its cross-cultural commonality.

There is great diversity in the ways in which the self has been conceptualized in Indian, as well as in Western, thought. Regardless of such diversity, it makes sense to assume that individuals in any society develop a variety of concepts of who they are, and that such concepts evolve under the joint impact of the bodily changes typical of the human life cycle on the "inside" and the historical changes in the society on the "outside." The need to develop and maintain a sense of unity and sameness in the face of diversity and changes in one's concepts of oneself can

be safely assumed to be common to human beings across cultures. Erikson's view of the sense of identity as an evolving configuration of roles and his analysis of the commonly experienced challenges, tribulations, and ways of coping hold great promise for universal applicability. The issue of how to account for unity and selfsameness in persons is a crucial issue that has received close attention from some of the greatest thinkers of both the Indian and Western traditions. It is in the context of this problem that the distinction between self-as-subject and self-as-object stands out as being not only common to both traditions, but also as a possible basis of convergence of perspectives.

In regard to the concept of identity, it is important to distinguish between two different meanings of this term: First there is the concept of identity as a matter of identification with something or other-with possessions, beliefs, ideology, social roles and relationships, or many other things. The common problem with multiple identifications is the danger of getting split by inner conflicts and outer pulls. Most people are able to maintain a sense of unity and sameness in the face of diversity and change; cases of multiple personality are relatively rare. Although the more cherished identifications provide inner organization and stability through long periods of change, the bonds of identification tend to loosen at times, are open to involuntary and voluntary change, and may even reverse, as in the case of ideological conversions. In principle, the strongest of identifications do not account for numerical identity in persons (i.e., the fact that we experience being *one* and the same person despite being identified with many different things at different times). The second meaning of identity is the principle of selfsameness: that which does not change under any circumstances or at any time. Accounting for the principle of numerical identity has been a difficult problem to which radically different solutions have been suggested in both traditions. The differing solutions are based on different ontological, epistemological, and axiological grounds, particularly on the differing values placed on sameness versus change, Being versus Becoming. These issues need to be looked at once again in the light of major similarities and differences in Indian and Western perspectives.

Two Views

Self, Consciousness, and the Trilogy of Mind

To say that personhood requires the capacity for cognition, affect, and conation is to say that consciousness is the fundamental prerequisite of personhood. Thinking, feeling, and willing have together been supposed to constitute the mind-or at least the core of it- and this, in turn, has usually been equated with consciousness. The Sanskrit term *cit* is a close equivalent of mind or consciousness understood in this sense. Assuming that thinking, feeling, and willing are inex-

tricably interrelated processes, we obtain the notion of a seamless continuum of psychological events. Within the conceptual framework of this trilogy of the mind, we can take each aspect separately and examine whether the self-as-knower, enjoyer–sufferer, or agent can account for the sameness in persons.

A perpetually changing environment- physical as well as social- demands an ongoing process of cognitive reconstruction of the nature of the world and of one's place within it. The ways and means required for the acquisition of knowledge change continually through cognitive accommodation within individuals and through new theories and methods in science. Even if we grant that the continual refinement in ways of knowing and knowledge produced through their means imply progress, perfect knowledge of all aspects of everything to be known is a dream, at least for now, and may remain so possibly forever. Insofar as ways and means of knowing can be said to constitute the self-as-knower, it cannot provide a firm basis for selfsameness in persons.

With appropriate changes, the same kind of considerations apply in regard to the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer. Changes within and around the individual are bound to bring about changes in the enjoyer–sufferer. Freud's notion of the erogenous zones encapsulates some of the common "inner" changes that shift the growing individual's typical ways of enjoying. While the body may acquire or lose painful allergies, we also learn and unlearn new tastes, whether it is a taste for wine or poetry. There are of course external conditions that force what and how much we might enjoy or suffer: cycles of rain and drought, economic cycles, or gain and loss that make a person happy or sad. Changed appraisal of the same object in light of changed values means changes in the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer itself; things that once brought immense joy could later be a bane in the event of renewed understanding to the relevant objects. Changes in the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer are part of the normal course of life; what we love in youth we often want to avoid in later life. Indeed, in some ways, the goal of therapy for a patient, as well as that of "correction" in a convict, is to bring about a radical change in what he or she finds enjoyable or hateful. The same is generally true in spiritual self-development; radical changes in the spiritual aspirant as sufferer–enjoyer are deemed necessary and possible. Turning now to the self-as-agent, we recognize it as having to be equally open to change. Projects once undertaken must be monitored in light of changing circumstances and must occasionally be redirected, abandoned, substituted, or even reversed in the light of changing circumstances. Flexibility is indeed key to meaningful action and successful agency.

While knowing, enjoying, and acting demand continual changes, they also require stability. A fickle agent would be unable to take any project to completion; as Kant's impeccable arguments conclusively demonstrated, the self-as-knower must be assumed to persist over time, since a succession of several different knowers during the process of knowing could not unite a multitude of experiences and ideas and make sense of them together. As well, the concept of justice im-

plies that the agent of good and bad actions must be the same as the enjoyer and sufferer of the respective consequences. Thus, being a person requires both persisting over a period of time and changing appropriately in changing circumstances. This challenge of having to account for both change and sameness applies equally to consciousness, the medium in which cognition, affect, and volition are combined together.

Thinking, feeling, and willing are rightly conceived of as *processes* of consciousness, thus recognizing their changing character. That our thoughts are in a constant state of flux is recognized by thinkers as widely separated in history and geography as Patañjali, Vyāsa Hume, James, and Sartre. This is hardly surprising, for the flowing character is ostensibly an unmistakable universal feature of human experience in the wakeful state. Humans, like creatures of many other species, go through a circadian cycle of wakefulness and sleep, while most experience occasional dream states as well. While this cyclical nature indicates the changing nature of consciousness, the sense of continued existence across daily cycles of wakefulness and sleep is also an equally common feature of human experience. We do not need William James's insights to remind us that Paul wakes up every morning as Paul, and not as Peter. Except for the rare cases of amnesic fugue and multiple personality, most people have the experience of being one and the same person through daily cycles of wakefulness and sleep week after week, decade after decade. It is not a great achievement on the part of the Upanisadic seers to have recognized the cyclical nature of the wakeful, sleep, and dream states. But the discovery of the fourth state of consciousness (which is uncharacterized by intentionality or subject–objectsplit typical of wakeful and dream states) and the conceptualization of the Self as the unchanging witness of the four states of consciousness, deserve to be recognized as great contributions of the Upaniṣadic sages. It is the fourth state that offers, they claim, a direct experience of an undivided, nondual, and unchanging Self, which they called the Ātman–Brahman.

Following the concept of cognition, affect, and conation as the three basic aspects of consciousness, I have tried to explain the systematic methods for the realization of the Self as developed in the traditions of the paths of knowledge *(jñāna),* contemplation *(dhyāna),* devotion *(bhakti),* and nonattached action *(niṣ kāma karma).* The basic program proposed by the path of knowledge is relentless critical self-examination with the guiding principle of rejecting anything open to change as the nonself. With the help of deep study of the basic principles of Advaita Vedānta, and after dispelling objections and doubts, one is said to be able to "see through" all ongoing thoughts as but provisional states of knowing, so as to reveal the Self in the experience of the fourth state of consciousness. In the path of contemplation as explained in Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms, the conduct of daily life is disciplined, one cultivates affective neutrality, learns to calm the mind by concentration, and deliberately retards the flow of thoughts until the stream of

consciousness comes to a stand still. With this attained, the meditator is said to be able to draw attention away from the objects of consciousness to the center of awareness so as to discover the unchanging nature of the self-as-subject. This strategy is said to help one experience a state of consciousness not much different from the fourth state described in the Upaniṣads and the Advaita Vedānta.

While in Patañjali's Yoga emotions are deliberately subdued and attention is drawn inward until one reaches the center of awareness, the path of devotion recommends the cultivation of intense feelings for a deity of the devotee's choice. In this approach, affect normally invested in the ego is transposed onto an all-pervasive God so that the devotee's sense of individuality is said to get dissolved like a doll made of salt immersed in water. Notwithstanding this interesting contrast between the paths of Yoga and devotion, they reach destinations that are quite alike; both help counter egoism. Also, while the Advaita Vedāntist seems to discover bliss at the center of subjective experience that quickly fills the entire space, the devotee is said to find love invested in the deity to manifest itself everywhere. The experience of the endless love of the "divine" is often as highly valued as that of the experience of the altered states of consciousness called *samādhi* in Advaita Vedānta and Yoga. The development of a variety of methods for the attainment of the altered states of consciousness and the attendant self-transformation is clearly a specialty of the many distinct spiritual traditions of the East in general and of India in particular. The various schools of Indian philosophy have developed alternative conceptual frameworks with sophisticated theories of reality, knowledge, and values.

Notwithstanding the irreconcilable doctrinal differences among these schools of philosophy and in their prescriptions for spiritual development, in some ways they are very similar. First, despite their relative emphasis on one or another aspect of the trilogy of mind, many, although not all, schools recognize a state of consciousness beyond cognition, affect, and conation. Second, although most schools are individualistic in the sense of emphasizing self-transformation through individual effort rather than reaching utopian goals through collective action, they nevertheless promise and cherish transpersonal goals such as compassion for all creatures rather than the pursuit of self-aggrandizement. Third, most of these schools point to the principle of unity in diversity and of sameness in change that is attained not through reason, but through some nonrational means, such as contemplation or devotion. This is true even of the Advaita Vedānta school, which suggests the use of critical thinking and dialectical reasoning to reach out to something beyond reason. Indeed, emphasis on something beyond reason is a common feature that sets many Eastern approaches to the study of persons apart and distinguishes them from most Western approaches. In the next section of this chapter, I will try to present Plato's view of reality and compare and contrast it with that of the Advaita Vedanta in an attempt to point out some deep similar-

ities, differences, and complementarities between prominent Indian and Western worldviews. The focus here will be on views of knowledge in general and self-knowledge in particular.

Levels of Reality in Plato and in Advaita vedanta

Figure 7.1 represents Plato's well-known view of the four stages of cognition and the corresponding levels of reality. The aspects of this approach most relevant to the present topic are as follows: First, Plato provides a perspective on levels of

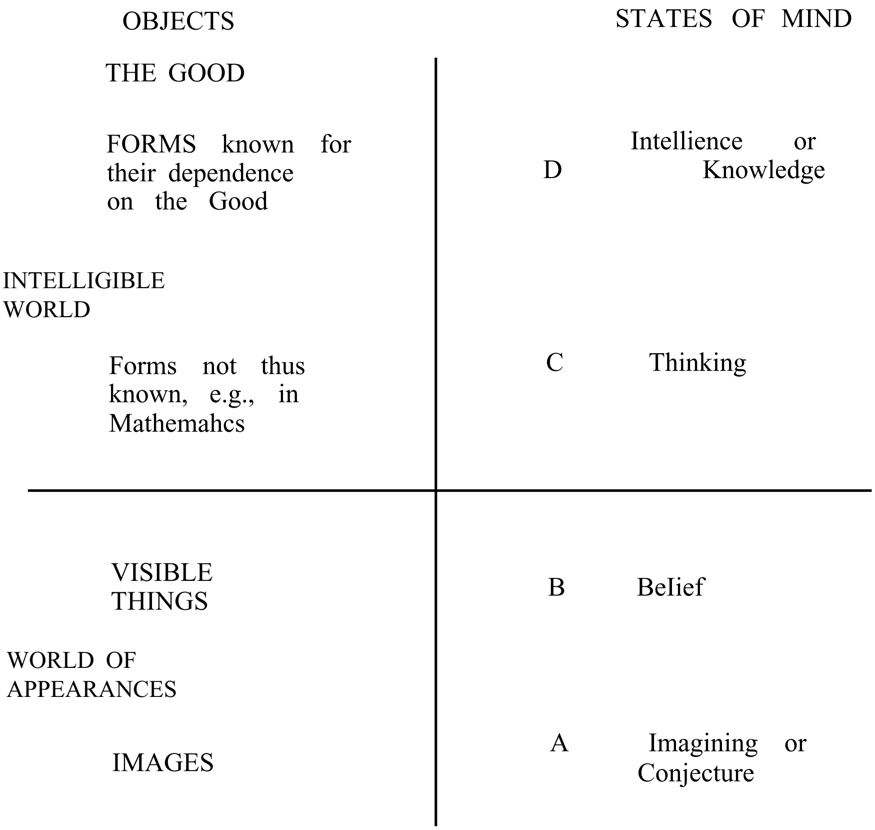

FIGURE 7.1. Plato's line dividing the world of visible objects from that of intelligible forms. Adapted from Plato (1941, p. 217).

reality and suggests ways of knowing them by means of various processes of consciousness. Elsewhere in the *Republic* (1941, p. 249), Plato assigns the lower levels of reality to the zone of Becoming, while placing the world of Forms in the higher levels to the sphere of Being. For Plato, the Forms were essences of things, which account for the unity underlying the multiplicity of similar phenomena: the essential "catness" of all the varieties of cats, the triangularity of all triangular objects and figures, and the Beauty of all beautiful things, and ultimately the Good in the entire universe. Plato conceived of a hierarchy of increasingly abstract, general, and universal Forms, which he viewed as imperishable and "real," i.e., belonging to a mind-independent reality. The multiple of objects accessible to the imagination and the senses were placed in the impermanent and less real world of Becoming and all the intelligible Forms in the category of Being. The implication of this view to the problem of identity should be clear. It is through thinking or reason that one reaches out to the unity in multiplicity, universal behind the particular (the Jamesian Self of selves), and thus to the principle of sameness underlying the interminable changes in the person.

Plato's concept of Forms and his concept of the "real" are highly complex and have generated much discussion throughout the history of Western thought, beginning with Aristotle's disagreement with Plato's sharp division between the Forms and the objects, between the abstract ideals and the concrete particulars. But the issue that I wish to raise is not the theory of Forms per se, nor the highly controversial issue of the nature of universals.' It is that Plato initiated the notion that it is through *reason* that we can discover the principle of unity in diversity and of sameness in change. It is my observation that, in the Western tradition, by and large, this Platonic strategy has been the most dominant strategy in dealing with the problem of identity for millennia. Let us take a look at the strategies of some of the staunchest defenders of the concept of an enduring self in the intellectual history of Europe.

During the medieval and Renaissance periods, when St. Augustine and Descartes affirmed the existence of a putative soul that continues throughout life and beyond, they basically pointed out the absurdity of denying the existence of the one who might be deceived, or of the one who thinks. During the Age of Enlightenment, when Hume questioned the sameness of the self since it was not given in experience, Butler and Kant defended the principle of selfsameness on *rational* grounds. Thus, while Butler argued that selfsameness of the one who remembers the past must be presumed in the concept of memory, Kant argued that unless we grant the continued existence of self-as-knower, we deny the very possibility of knowledge, which is absurd. In the 20th century, Wittgenstein echoed Butler's position in suggesting that the language games we use in speaking of the person or the self are based on the presumption of the continued existence of entities we represent by those terms. In all these instances, the primary basis for affirming the continued existence of the self is the use of reason or thinking, which

is the classical Platonic strategy. Kant also follows Plato's footsteps in distinguishing between higher and lower levels of reality, the noumenal and the phenomenal, but recognizes the limitations of reason in directly accessing noumenal entities such as the Pure Ego. This is like Plato's metaphor of the Sun, the Truth incarnate, which he thought was so bright as to blind those who dared to use reason and peep out of the dark caves of their mundane existence.

Returning now to the Platonic scheme represented in Fig. 7.1, we may note that it suggests connections between different levels of reality and its knowledge by means of specific "states of mind." Although this scheme has been affirmed, elaborated, modified, and criticized in many different ways over the centuries, it has nevertheless provided a basic framework for understanding the role of the states or processes of consciousness in attaining knowledge in general, and self-knowledge in particular. In Plato's scheme, various "states of mind" are means leading to "lower" as well as "higher" forms of knowledge. Granting that translations from Greek to English and from philosophical language into the idiom of contemporary psychology are problematic, let me attempt to explain what is involved in Plato's concept of the "states of mind." In my view, they involve a variety of sensory and cognitive processes. First, what Plato calls "Belief" (quadrant B in Fig. 7.1) involves seeing, hearing, and other sensory processes on the basis of which we believe in the existence of objects in the physical world. Next, "conjecture" (quadrant A) can be understood to mean cognitive construction involved in setting up hypotheses; "thinking" (C) involves deductive reasoning as used in mathematics; and Plato's reference to engaging in dialogues in attaining "knowledge" (D) suggests cognitive processes involved in oppositional (or "dialectical") thinking necessary for discriminating between permanent versus impermanent, good versus bad. Together, I would submit, Plato's view suggests a variety of sensory and cognitive processes as means to knowledge at any and all levels.

This is not much different from the idea of "experience" and "reason" as two sources of knowledge, an idea that has persisted in the West for the past several centuries. These two sources imply sensory and cognitive processes, which is the traditional domain of psychological studies. It is further implied that the wakeful state of consciousness in which these processes occur provides the only window on the world available to us. The use of the interpretation of dreams in psychoanalytical studies of repressed desires and conflicts is a rare exception to this implicit but common assumption. There is little use in the Western tradition for other states of consciousness. Plotinus, who spoke of the One as the single ultimate principle of the universe almost the same way as the Upaniṣads spoke of Brahman, apprehended it in some altered state of consciousness as indicated by his disciple's account of his extraordinary experiences. Although the contemplative tradition of neo-Platonism still survives in Europe, it is marginalized and has little if any impact on the mainstream of Western thought. The psychologists William James

and Abraham Maslow recognized the "noetic" or illuminating as well as redeeming qualities of extraordinary states of consciousness. However, by and large, response to such claims in contemporary psychology is often hostile and weak at its best.

This is precisely where the Indian tradition is radically different. In Yoga and Vedānta as well as in most schools of Buddhist thought in India and elsewhere in Asia, the attainment of higher states of consciousness is a matter of great importance, and evidence obtained in such states is considered crucial. In Zen Buddhism, for instance, the nature and significance of the experience of satori is similar to that of *samādhi* in Yoga. In several systems of Asian thought, the experience of such states is particularly critical in understanding the nature of self and self-transformation regardless of their differing positions on many issues. In the balance of this chapter, I wish to summarize some of the key features of the Advaita Vedāntic views of person, self, and identity with an emphasis on the validation and valuation of the experience of the Self that is said to occur in the fourth state of consciousness. In this context, the Advaita Vedāntic view may be schematically presented in Fig. 7.2.

The larger ellipse in Fig. 7.2 schematically represents the Advaita Vedāntic

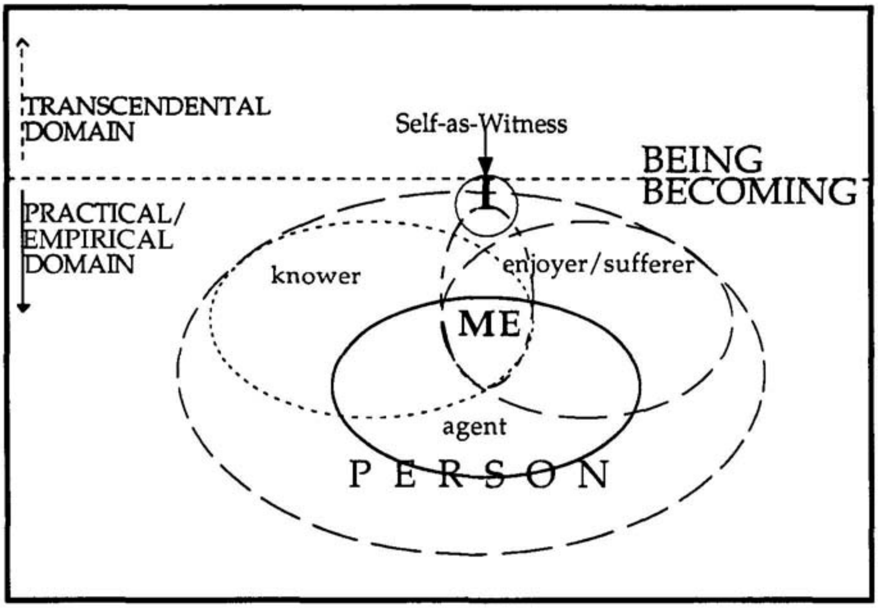

FIGURE 7.2. A schematic diagram representing the Advaita Vedantic view of the person and the levels of reality.

view of the person as a knower, enjoyer–sufferer, and agent. The dotted line of the larger ellipse suggests the open and flexible "boundaries" of a person's individuality, and the three overlapping medium-sized ellipses within indicate the mutually intertwined psychological processes of cognition, emotion, and volition. The smaller inner ellipse represents the "ego" with its sense of Me and Mine *(ahaṁkāra)* and the attendant sense of ownership of one's beliefs, emotions, and actions. The dotted horizontal straight line suggests the conceptual separation between the transcendental *(parā)* and practical *(vyāvahārika, aparā)* levels of reality *(sattā)*. The person obviously belongs to the practical/empirical domain knowable through sensory experience and reason. In this schematic representation, the "I" could be viewed as being "located" at a person's center of experience, grounded in the transcendental domain of Being on the "inner" side and accessing countless intentional objects in the world of Becoming on the "outer." As long as the person remains attached to various intentional objects by way of knowing, feeling, and acting, the "I" understands the world through the filters of the cognitive system available at that time. In this mode, the "I" identifies itself with an evolving configuration of a multitude of Jamesian selves. If and when one loosens the ties of identification with various intentional objects and sees through the set of filters by means of listening, contemplation, and other such methods of "meditation," one no longer remains stuck with the multiple selves and their changing fortunes. The cultivation of a sense of detachment *(vairāgya)* allows a person to experience him- or herself as an uninvolved witness unaffected by the trials and tribulations of daily life, like the proverbial lotus leaf untouched by the surrounding water and muck. When one becomes firmly anchored in the witnessing mode, attention can be withdrawn completely from the plethora of intentional objects, the intentional stance *(bahiḥ prajña)* can be dispensed with, and the subject–object distinction typical of the wakeful and dream states of consciousness drops off. At that point, one experiences an altered state of consciousness *(nirvikalpa samādhi)* devoid of the subject–object split. In this experience, the Self experiences itself as simply existing or Being; that one always is.

This schematic outline of the Advaita Vedāntic approach indicates some similarities with the Platonic approach shown in Fig. 7.1. The two are alike in delineating lower and higher levels of reality; both place Being at a higher level of reality and value it over Becoming, and both suggest ways of reaching out to the higher level of reality by the use of dialogical thinking. However, the main difference between the two approaches is that in the Advaita Vedānta the attainment of "wisdom" through the study of texts and their dialogical arguments is not considered to be adequate. A follower of the Advaitic approach is expected to be able to attain self-realization via the experience of the fourth state of consciousness. The Kantian worldview also suggests a distinction between lower (phenomenal) and higher (transcendental) levels of reality somewhat similar to the Advaita Vedāntic approach. However, Kant merely points at the Pure Ego at the noumenal

level by means of astute arguments and denies direct access to it. As William James noted in his critique of the Kantian position, the Pure Ego is merely a matter of postulation; it could neither be verified nor found to be useful in any way. By contrast, the Advaita Vedānta approach not only claims the possibility of directly experiencing the Self, but also explains how such claims can be verified and what beneficial consequences follow from such experience.

The Validation and Valuation of the Experience of the Self

The issues of validation and valuation belong to the fields of knowledge and values, which brings us back to epistemology and axiology. Issues of epistemology are often intricately connected with ontological presuppositions. In an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1984), I have discussed in detail approaches to consciousness of major schools of Western psychology and Indian thought.[2] Since 1 have compared in that context the ontological presuppositions, investigative strategies, epistemological doctrines, and values that shape their approaches to consciousness, I shall not repeat the discussion here. I shall only briefly go over some of the epistemological and axiological considerations that are connected directly with the validation and valuation of the experience of Self. I shall avoid discussion of differing ontological doctrines, since at least in Indian though views on validation of knowledge of higher states of consciousness closely parallel each other even among schools that uphold radically different and irreconcilable ontological doctrines. For instance, as we shall soon see, Advaita Vedānta and Yoga adopt closely compatible views on the validation of the highest state of *samādhi* although the strictly nondualist ontology of the former could never be reconciled with the latter's strongly dualist position. Moreover, as we saw earlier, rival schools of Advaita Vedānta also radically differ on the issue of realism versus idealism, and yet their approaches depend heavily on the evidence of the *samādhi* state. Let me therefore set aside ontological matters and turn to epistemological issues of verifiability and falsifiability.

Let us first consider Patañjali's Yoga system, which squarely addresses the issue of verifiability. In his commentary on Patañjali's aphorisms, Vyāsa (3.6) clarifies that Yoga can be known only by *doing* Yoga.[3] What this means is that *samādhi* states can be directly experienced by any interested persons if they follow the procedures that are clearly spelled out (Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 207–210). In other words, any doubts regarding Yogic claims about the nature of *samādhi* states can be tested if one is ready to follow a specific set of procedures. The Yogic claim relevant to the identity issue is that, when the stream of consciousness *(citta nadī)* is brought to a standstill by means of concentrative meditation, the Self stays in its own (unchanging) state, thereby directly experiencing that which accounts for selfsameness within us. This Yogic approach to validation of its claims by repeating a set procedure has an uncanny concordance with the concepts of testability

and confirmability of propositions and of replicability of results, which have been extensively discussed in the history of the philosophy of science. For a proposition to be testable, its concepts and principles must be clearly stated, the conditions under which the putative results are obtainable must be specified, and the procedures leading to those conditions must be clearly laid out and in principle be repeatable. The principles of Yoga are clearly stated in texts that are widely available around the world, the preparations and procedures leading to the *samādhi* states have been clearly spelled out, and they can be followed by anyone who is interested and has acquired the stated prerequisites. Adequate preparation, including training in the discipline as well as acquisition of appropriate skills, is of course a necessary part in the discovery and validation of knowledge in any field.

Like the Yogis, the Advaita Vedāntists, too, rely on the experience of the *samādhi* state in support of their claim that the self-as-subject, or Ātman, accounts for the principle of selfsameness in persons. However, in contrast to the Yogis, the Advaita Vedāntists rely more on the principle of falsifiability than verifiability. As noted in Chapter 3, Advaita Vedāntists view knowledge as cognition that is not-yet-falsified, highlighting the provisional nature of all empirical knowledge, which is said to be always open to falsification. Indeed, the Advaita Vedāntist emphasis on unfalsified cognition strikes a deep chord with Popper's views of falsification, and the nature and limits of the similarity between the two merits serious discussion. However, space does not permit a detailed discussion here of this issue in the light of the varieties of falsificationism suggested in contemporary philosophy of science (e.g., Lakatos, 1970). While recognizing the deep similarity between the Popperian spirit of open conjectures and rigorous refutation on the one hand and the Advaita Vedantist invitation to test every belief against all possible doubts and antitheses on the other, some obvious differences between them may be noted. First, the primary context of Popperian falsification is the natural and social sciences, and much of the recent debate is concerned with ensuring the progress of science. By contrast, the primary context of Yoga and Vedānta is self-knowledge, and its basic concern is personal edification. Second, while in contemporary natural and social sciences there is an unwritten demand for publicly accessible data, the experiences on which propositions concerning the nature of the self are based are not publicly accessible.

Empirical verification of any sort has to ultimately depend on the *experience* of the person who desires it, and nobody's experience is *directly* accessible to anybody else. Scientists circumvent the problem of privacy by restricting their subject matter to objects and events that are equally open for anybody to see, touch, or smell, such as a red precipitate in a test tube, or the position of a needle on a properly connected electrical meter. Such restriction poses no problems for the natural sciences since their chosen subject matter excludes such things as selfhood and consciousness. To exclude such things from psychology is to throw away the baby with the bath water as the behaviorists did. Psychologists who dare to concern

themselves with issues such as pain, which are in the domain of consciousness inaccessible to public scrutiny, must deal with epistemological problems of experiential verification. In regard to such private states as pain, as noted before, in my view the philosopher Kurt Baier (1962) was right in granting the person whose private state it is the final epistemological authority. For, to put it in commonsense terms, only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches and whether or not it is painful. Such authority of course presumes that the person claiming to say that "I have a shooting pain in my groin" understands what is talked about and shares consensual meanings of such descriptors with interlocutors in an atmosphere of mutuality and trust. Neither a child who has yet to learn to discriminate between a headache and a heartburn nor a malingering worker trying to obtain worker's compensation may be granted epistemic authority over their statements of pain. Assuming that a trustworthy adult is speaking of pain in a "phantom limb" (in an amputated arm that no longer exists, for instance), the report of pain is not falsifiable. As noted by Hebb (1960) and other psychologists, one can experience a real pain in a phantom limb. In the Indian tradition, accounts of experiences of states such as *samādhi* have been accepted as reliable testimony from highly trustworthy persons whose motives are beyond reproach and whose words are more acceptable than those of honest patients complaining of pain in a phantom limb.

The Advaita Vedāntic accounts of the nature of *virvikalpa samādhi,* like the Yogic descriptions of the nature of the *asamprajñata samā dhi,* are not falsifiable in two different ways. First, both states are said to belong to the "no-thought zone" of consciousness in that the former lacks the intentional mode needed for and implicit in speech and in the latter mind is said to be stilled and emptied of thoughts. As such, these states are beyond verbal description, and as such are sometimes considered "mystical" states. It makes sense that William James considered such states "ineffable," echoing the Upanisadic expression *"neti, neti"* or "not so, not so." In such states the Self, or the experiencing self-as-subject, simply is; describing it in statements such as "I am so and so, or in such a state" is impossible and meaningless. And obviously if something cannot be stated in a prepositional form, it cannot be refuted. Second, such *samādhi* states are beyond the range of falsification in the sense that they can be experienced only after cognitive processes such as observation and argumentation, which are necessarily involved in trying to falsify anything, have come to a stop. Insofar as the Popperian criterion of science insists on having to deal with theories that are in principle falsifiable, the states of *samādhi* are beyond the scope of Popperian science.

Indeed, self-knowledge in this Upaniṣadic sense is an oxymoron, since the distinction between the knower and the known implicit in the common concept of knowing is said to be absent in the fourth state of consciousness. For someone experiencing the fourth state, there is no longer any need for, or relevance of, either

a speaker trying to convince someone or a listener who either might support or refute the speaker's statements. The absence of speaker and listener is meant not only in the sense of two separate embodied humans, but also in the sense of two inner voices addressing each other in silent conversation, like a Meadian self or "I" speaking to a "generalized other." It is important to note in this regard that in the Indian tradition, a distinction is made between two fundamentally different types of "knowledge": *vṛtti jñāna,* meaning knowledge that is embedded in the cognitive states, and *svarūpa jñan*a, which implies knowledge of the Self that lies beyond the cognitive states.[4] This latter concept of knowledge may not be absent from the Western tradition, but it certainly is not common in contemporary psychology or philosophy of science.

As noted in Chapter 1, in contemporary discourse in the philosophy of science, following Sellars (1963), a distinction is sometimes made between "knowing *that"* and "knowing *how."* Knowing that something is so, such as "I own this house," may be either true or false and is open to falsification. But in several matters of knowing how, such as knowing how to swim, putting the knowledge to use is more important than deciding its truth or falsity. In other words, utility is an important criterion for judging knowledge claims. A solution to a problem that brings results is a good solution; I have heard a psychologist expressing it in terms of "engineering validity." William James was disappointed with Kant's notion of the transcendental Ego, not simply because he found it unverifiable, but mainly because he thought its postulation was useless. He called it a "nothing … an ineffectual and windy … abortion" (James, 1890/1983, p. 345). The emphasis on effectiveness implicit in this remark is suggestive of James's pragmatism. Turning now to the Indian side, we may note that the notion of transcendental Self in Yoga and Advaita Vedānta is not only verifiable as noted above, it is also effective; effective, that is, in bringing about a major transformation in the individual who discovers it. What is the nature of such a transformation, and why should a discovery of the principle of selfsameness lead to it?

To repeat the answer suggested before, the discovery of the Self in the *samādhi* state is expected to result in the experience of inner peace and tranquillity by the person after returning to ordinary states of consciousness. This is because, having realized that the "I" is the indescribable Ātman-Brahman, which implies everything that ever was, is, and will be, one is no longer lured by commonly coveted possible selves nor afraid of becoming some fearful possible self in the future. Such overcoming of covetousness and fear dispenses with a fragile and vainglorious ego, which in turn manifests in unselfish and compassionate behavior. This should explain why the Indian tradition as reflected in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* portrays self-realized persons as saintly in their behavior. Such behavior is an observable aftereffect of the experience of the Self. Indeed, self-proclaimed claims to self-realization are routinely shunned in the Indian cultural tradition and saintly manifestations of boundless compassion are often viewed as proof of self-realization.

Being unselfish and having genuine compassion for all humans are characteristics valued everywhere. There is nothing strange if a self-realized Advaita Vēdantist is as much interested in human welfare as a Baconian scientist is dedicated to the "improvement of the estate of man *[sic].*" What is ironic is that while in Buddhism the discovery of no-self is said to lead to unlimited compassion *(karuṇā),* in Advaita Vedānta the same is said to follow from the conviction that there is nothing more real than the Self. As noted in Chapter 2, the apparent contradiction in the Advaitic and Buddhist positions arises partly from differences in what they mean by the self which they affirm or deny. As we shall presently see, the differences could partly be understood in terms of the differences in their relative valuation of sameness versus change, Being versus Becoming.

The Relative Valuation of Being and Becoming

Since the time of Buddha and Heraclitus there are some who value Becoming over Being, and there are others like the Upanisadic seers and Parmenides who place Being at a level higher than Becoming. Such relative preferences continue generation after generation, as they did with Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hume. To some extent, the differences in perspective are similar to saying that a cup is half empty or half full; while both accounts are correct, some prefer to look at one half more than the other. There are of course still others who see the glass both full and empty at the same time. Thus, in psychology, there are several perspectives that recognize the changing as well as the relatively fixed or stable aspects of behavior, although there might be relative emphasis on either side. The behaviorist approach, for instance, seemed to generally favor change over stability in that the processes of learning and plasticity of behavior were emphasized and concepts such as traits suggesting stable or invariant patterns were often denied or disputed. At the same time, the overall thrust of the behaviorist approach was to discover universal laws that govern behavior at all times, assuming an eternal and invariant structure of the universe. Turning to the psychoanalytic approach, we note that Freud's model showed how patterns of libidinal gratification undergo systematic changes from one stage of psychosexual development to the next. Yet, Freud insisted that every child has a distinctive way of resolving the Oedipal conflict, which shapes his character in a way that is difficult to change despite years of analysis. Then again Piaget's cognitive approach emphasized the constant interplay of assimilation and accommodation, of the coexisting forces of stability and change. Yet, as noted, Piaget explicitly favored Becoming over Being. Further, in the Eriksonian model, although the focus is on identity, which is essentially a principle of selfsameness, an individual's sense of identity is said to be forever revisable, thus implicitly emphasizing Becoming over Being.

Turning now to Indian thought, we may note that the Advaita Vedātists recognize the constantly changing phenomenal reality *(māyā),* although they devalue this aspect by assigning it to a lower level of reality and insist that the unchanging

Brahman is the single immanent and transcendent principle underlying all changes in the universe. The Yoga system, however, follows the Sāṅkhya system in assigning equal weight to Being and Becoming reflected in a thoroughly dualistic ontology. By comparison, the Buddha chose not to get involved with "metaphysical" issues of dualism and nondualism. Instead, he focused on Becoming in recognition of the need for improvement common to most men and women. By comparison, the Advaita Vedantists adopted a different strategy: of appealing to people to realize that thinking as if impermanent things like youth and wealth are permanent contributed more to suffering than happiness, and urging them to search for that in themselves which remains unchanged forever. It is important to look at both Being and Becoming in one way or another, for like the empty and filled parts, and like yin and yang, East and West, both taken together account for the whole.

On Bridging the Gulf: Between Being and Becoming, East and West

Being and Becoming are dialectical twins; each does not mean anything without an implicit reference to its counterpart. There is an interesting tale about Parvati, the goddess said to symbolize the perpetually evolving phenomenal world. She is said to have once reminded her consort Lord Shiva, the symbol of Eternity who survives periodic destruction of creation, that His most hallowed selfsameness has no meaning without reference to her own continually changing character. We may say, *mutais mutandis,* that selfsame "I" has little meaning without reference to the continually changing "Me;" the two coexist side by side, as it were, within one and the same person. The *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad (3.1–3) presents this idea in a beautiful metaphor:

> Two birds, fast bound companions,
> Clasp close the self-same tree.
> Of these two, the one eats sweet fruit;
> The other looks on without eating. (1)
> On the self-same tree a person, sunken,
> Grieves for his impotence, deluded;
> When he sees the other, the Lord (īś), contented,
> And his greatness, he becomes freed from sorrow. (2)
> When a seer sees the brilliant
> Maker, Lord, Person, the Brahman-source,
> Then, being a knower, shaking off good and evil,
> Stainless, he attains supreme identity (sāmya) [with Him]. (3)
> (*Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad, 3.1–2;R. E. Hume's translation, 1931, p. 374)

Traditional commentaries such as the one by Śaṅkara (1964) explain that in this poem the tree symbolizes the embodied person; the bird that eats fruit is the Me, the enjoyer–suffererattached to various objects in the world; and its twin is the "knower of the field" *(kṣetrajña),* or the "I" as an uninvolved Self-as-Witness. The main message of the metaphor is that the true Self is the witness with a

capacity to look over everything in life without grieving for the losses nor celebrating the victories as its twin, the Me, does. In other words, if one adopts the stance of an uninvolved witness, then one stays "above" the waves that rock the ego and toss it up and down on an emotional roller coaster. Lasting bliss and relief from suffering is said to be attained by remaining anchored in the stance of an uninvolved witness.

For those committed to winning the battles in the game of one-upmanship or to the ideal of perpetual progress toward better or bigger of something or other, the bird that simply looks over is a useless model. Such a model would be either complacent, impotent, or indicative of a "sour grapes" attitude. Being a passive witness might be rated as worse than a powerless "speaker" of a House to whom everyone in the House defers by way of formality but has no clout. Ironically, in the above quote, the Upanisad views the uninvolved bird as the Lord, keeping the high position of *contentment,* not of complacency. Many of us today would rather be a president of the republic with "real" power over the army and the cabinet than a figurehead royal dispassionately witnessing the rise and fall of powerful politicians. In modern times, the hero is more popular than the saint. Even if one is not driven by a desire for power, as long as we are involved with the affairs of daily life, we cannot afford to stagnate; we must keep changing as per demands of the perpetually changing world in which we live. And insofar as change is inevitable, it makes sense to try change for the better and avoid being pulled down. On this matter Buddha and Aristotle are alike; while the former urges us to improve ethically, the latter advocates self-actualization.

Self-actualization is model of self-transformation favored widely in the Western tradition from Aristotle to Maslow. As I have noted elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1984), the idea of self-actualization has usually implied the actualization of *potentials.* The idea here is that human beings have hidden strengths that manifest themselves in accomplishments in some form or other. It is implicitly in this sense that the human potential movement in American psychology in the past few decades tried to develop methods for enhancing the self-actualization of persons. Such a concept of self-development is consistent with the notion of perpetual progress, which is a dominant theme of the Western tradition. In principle there is no end to how much we can accomplish in quantity or quality, whether in terms of the measurable amount of wealth or speed or in terms of the intangible quality of an artistic creation. This model clearly favors Becoming over Being. An alternative model is that of the discovery of one's Being, of the realization of the Self that one was, is, and would remain forever. In this model, the self is not a trove of hidden potentials to be coaxed into some or other form of gain. It is, rather, a matter of *realization,* i.e., of unveiling of the selfsame principle of the "I" that mistakenly appears as the Me in varied incarnations.

But then, why should the discovery of Being be more valuable than constantly trying to be better and better in something or other? To repeat, there are two

considerations that justify such an evaluation. First, the race for bigger and better never ends; expectations always exceed levels of success, thereby contributing to net dissatisfaction. Second, in old age as we run out of time to improve, we are likely to be haunted by the thought that we never found the true self; that we lived a wrong life in the service of a pseudoself, and there will be no time to change the situation. If one discovers the immutable Self - that which one always was, is, and will remain - then one need not keep searching for the best that one would wish to be nor mourn for not having become what one could/should have become. Such a discovery would not only mitigate any feelings of existential despair, but also lead to an undisturbed calm. According to Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1), the realization of an immutable Self occurs upon the removal of the common *errors* of attributing to the unchanging self-as-subject the continually changing features of the self-as-object on the one hand and of presuming unity and permanence of the many changing selves on the other. For removing these errors, one does not need to go anywhere or do anything, as is implicit in trying to attain self-actualization, The kingdom of heaven, it is said, is within each of us.

The 17th-century saint–poet Tukārām put it into simple terms that may be paraphrased as follows: Your Self is with you; but you are not finding it since you are looking for it in the wrong place. This reminds us of the Sufi parable of someone looking for his lost keys under the light not because they were lost there, but because one could see there. We need not laugh at this misguided keyseeker; there are volumes after volumes of empirical and rational investigations of the self that miss the point that looking for the Self where it *IS* is deceptively simple. The See-er is not an object to be looked at; if it were, Hume would have found it in his introspective investigation. But then Kant assigned the Pure Ego to the forever experientially inaccessible world of the noumenal reality. Although so close as to Be itself, the See-er remains so elusive as to need years of research. For Plato, as for many who followed him over the centuries, the gulf between the one and the many, reality and appearance, seemed too wide to bridge. Interestingly, the *Muṇḍaka* (2.2.5), as well as *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads conceived of the metaphor of a bridge that connects Being or "immortality" on the one hand with Becoming or "mortality" on the other:

> Now the Soul (Ātman) is the bridge [or dam], the separation for keeping these worlds apart. Over that bridge [or dam] there cross neither day, nor night, nor old age, nor death, nor sorrow, nor well-doing, nor evil-doing. All evils turn back therefrom, for that Brahma-world is freed from evil. (1)
>
> Therefore, verily, upon crossing that bridge, if one is blind, he becomes no longer blind; if he is sick, he becomes no longer sick. Therefore, verily, upon crossing that bridge, the night appears even as the day, for that Brahma-world is ever illuminated. (2)
> (*Chāndogya* Upaniṣad, 8.4.1-2; Hume's translation, pp. 265–266)

The bridge to be crossed is after all *within* us; on the one side is the Being that affords the experience of the unmistakable sameness of the "I," while on the other

side is the "Me" that does not cease to clothe itself in ever-new garb. It would appear that the self-realization model has been generally favored by the likes of Advaita Vedāntists in the East, to the relative neglect of self-actualization. It would also appear that the likes of Aristotle and Erikson in the West have emphasized self-actualization of the ever-evolving Me to the relative neglect of the transcendental center of awareness. However, East and West are at the two sides of everyone at all times. Being on that bridge is simply to realize that East and West are as inevitable a pair as Being and Becoming, the "I" and the "Me."

Notes

1. For a concise account of the long debates in Europe over the "problem of universals," see W. T. Jones (1969, Vol. 2, pp. 185–196).
2. In *Theoretical Psychology: The Meeting of East and West* (Paranjpe, 1984, Ch. 2 and 3), I have discussed the following perspectives on consciousness: William James's, structuralist, behaviorist, psychoanalytical, psychophysiological, phenomenological, Yogic, and Advaita Vedantic.
3. Vyasa's words in this connection are:

   yogo yogena jñātavyo yogo yogat pravartate | (Vyasa, 3.6).

4. I wish to thank Dr. Nalinee Chapekar for pointing out this distinction.

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Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

abādhita Not (yet) contradicted or falsified. According to the Advaita Vedānta, a cognition that has not yet been falsified is taken to be truthful.

adhyāsa An Advaita Vēdantic term meaning superimposition, or misattribution, of the properties of the single, unchanging Self onto the many changing selves, and vice versa.

adhyātma;adhyātmavidyā Literally, *adhyātma* means pertaining to the self, and generally it relates to things pertaining to the spiritual well being of persons. *Adhyātmavidyā* is the "science of the self."

āgama Authority of the scriptures. In Advaita Vedānta, scriptural statements on matters such the Self or ultimate reality are accepted as truths in a manner that testimony of trustworthy persons is considered valid.

ānanda Bliss.

antaḥkaraṇa "Inner instrument," conceived of in Advaita Vedānta as including the mind and the intellect.

anubhava A broad term meaning experience in general, including perceptual, as well as transcendental, experience.

anubhāva Overt expressions accompanying the experience of emotions.

anumāna Inference.

anupalabdhi Knowledge based on the lack of empirical data about something, such as knowing that my pen is not now on the table.

aparā vidyā Lower level of knowledge as conceived in the Advaita Vedānta, which implies knowledge of the phenomenal world through sensory experience and reason, as opposed to higher level of knowledge attained in altered states of consciousness such as the fourth state.

apavarga Emancipation of the soul from continued transmigration.

artha (1) Wealth, often considered in the Indian tradition as one of the four major goals worth attaining in life along three others: *dharma, kāma, and mokṣa.* (2) Object of experience.

arthāpatti Postulation, assumption, or supposition as a means to knowledge.

āsanu Bodily postures, especially as recommended in Yoga as one ofthe aids to concentration.

ātman The Self.

ātmavidyā Knowledge or "science" of the Self.

avidyā Generally, ignorance, or nescience. In Advaita Vedānta, the term *avidyā* is used in contrast with knowledge of the absolute - Brahman - attained in higher states of consciousness. In recognition of the inherent limits of all empirical knowledge and rational understanding, the term *avidyā* is often presumed to include "scientific" knowledge.

bhakti Devotion, primarily understood as devotion to God or a deity.

bhāva Emotion.

bhoktā One who enjoys and/or suffers.

Brahmā God as Creator; one of the three divine principles conceived in Hinduism along with Viṣṇu, the Protector, and Maheśa or Śiva, the Destroyer.

Brahman Absolute single principle ofreality as conceived in the Upanisads and in the Advaita Vedanta.

buddhi Intellect.

cit Consciousness.

citta Mind, especially as conceived of in Yoga as having the capacity to attend and to serve as a storehouse of impressions left behind by past experiences.

dharma A term with complex and varied meanings, including duties appropriate for one's station in life, social ethos that regulates individual behavior and society as a whole, natural properties ofthings, and so on. Doing one's duties is considered one of the four major goals in life, along with *artha, kāma* and *mokṣa.*

dhāraṇā A Yogic term meaning anchoring the stream ofthoughts to a particular object of thought.

dhyāna Contemplation, specifically defined in Yogic terminology as a steady and homogenous flow of thoughts.

guṇa Generally, property or characteristic of a thing, but in Sāṅkhya philosophy guṇa implies one of the three *(sattva, rajas, tams)* "strands" or interacting components of Prakṛti the primordial materiality of the universe.

indriya Sense organ.

Īśvara God, conceived differently in different schools ofthought. In Patañjali's Yoga, for instance, Īśvara is a special soul or spirit untouched by traces of afflicted actions.

jīva Literally, a living being; but in Advaita Vedānta, it designates a human being with capacity to know, feel, and to engage in intentional action, thus meaning a person.

jñāna Knowledge.

jñāna mārga, or jñāna yoga Method of self-realization or spiritual self-development by means of attaining knowledge of the Self through critical self-examination.

jñāntā The person or self with the capacity to know or understand.
kaivalya Literally, isolation. In the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems, the term *kaivalya* implies the state of release from the unending chain of action and its consequences through the isolation or detachment of the Self *(Puruṣa)* from Prakṛti.
kalpita Imagined or constructed.
kāma Literally, desire. Often, the term is used to indicate the fulfillment of desires as one of the four major goals of life, along with *dharma, artha,* and *mokṣa*
karma Literally, action; most commonly, the term implies the notion that all actions are necessarily followed by lawful and legitimate consequences.
kartā The person or self as an agent.
kośa Sheath. The Advaita Vedānta conceives of the *jīva* or person as a multi-layered entity composed of five nested sheaths, with the body on the outside, followed by bodily functions, sensory capacities, cognitive functions, and finally blissfulness at the core
manus Common meaning of *manas* is the mind. In Advaita Vedānta the basic features of *manas* are the capacities for cognitive differentiation and integration and for doubting and deciding.
manana The process of critical examination of the nature of selfhood in the light of the fundamental teachings of Vedānta as a means to self-realization,
māyā The Advaita Vedānta conception of the phenomenal world as a "Grand Illusion," so conceived because of the inherent limits of empirical knowledge and rational understanding.
mokṣa Liberation from the perpetual chain of actions and their consequences and the consequent cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.
mukti Synonym for *mokṣa* (see above).
nididhyāsana The state of being so completely absorbed in contemplation of Brahman that no other thought enters the mind.
niḥśreyas The highest Good as conceived in the Indian tradition; it usually implies the highest state of enlightenment through self-knowledge.
nirguṇa Without qualities. According to Advaita Vedlnta, Brahman, the ultimate reality, is said to have a qualityless substrate behind or beyond the perceptible and intelligible world.
nivrikalpa pratyakṣa Direct experience without cognitive constructions, implying sensory experience that newborn babies and animals may have.
nivrikalpa samādhi An altered state of consciousness devoid of the subject–object split typical of the common, intentional states obtained in dreams and wakefulness.
niyama Observances, such as cleanliness and self-control, recommended in the second of eight steps to Yoga.
parā sattā Transcendental reality.
parā vidyā Transcendental knowledge of Self and reality obtained in higher states of consciousness, such as the fourth state described in the Upaniṣads.

prātibhāsika sattā World appearance in illusory perception, such as the appearance of silver in a conch shell.

prajñā A term used with a variety of meanings in various contexts: wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, discrimination, and the like.

Prakṛti A term used in the dualistic ontology ofthe Sāṅkhya system to designate the "material" as opposed to the sentient principle called *Puruṣa.* Sometimes translated as "primordial materiality."

pramā Knowledge, or cognition supported by at least some criteria of validation and uncontradicted by any available evidence.

pramāṇa An epistemic criterion for validating a cognition.

prana Vital breath.

pratyaksa Direct perception.

pratyahara Yogic term for the withdrawal of senses from the objects of awareness.

Puruṣa Literally, man, or a human being. In the dualistic ontology of the Sāṅkhya system, *Puruṣa* implies the Self, or the sentient principle of reality as distinguished from *Prakṛti,* the material principle.

rajas One of the three components or "strands" of Prakṛti as conceived in Sāṅkhya philosophy, *rajas* is the active principle, roughly equivalent to energy. The other two principles are *sattva* and *tamas.*

rasa Literally, juice, essence, or relish. In traditional Indian esthetics, *rasa* means "aesthetic relish," or the delectable quality inherent in a work of art.

sādhāraṇīkaraṇa The "generalization" or sharing of emotional experience during collective witnessing of dramatic and other works of art.

saṁādhi Name of a set of altered states of consciousness described in Yoga, Vedanta, and other systems of Indian philosophy.

saṁkalpa Integrative aspect of cognitive construction; also decision as opposed to doubt or indecision.

saṁsāra The perpetual cycle of action and its consequences, including the putative cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In the Indian tradition, in *saṁsāra* suffering is believed to exceed happiness.

saṁskāra The impressions left behind by experiences and actions that are said to shape future experiences and behaviors.

sat Being.

sattva One of the three components or "strands" of *Prakṛti* as conceived in Sankhya philosophy, *sattva* is said to be characterized by illumination and lightness as opposed to darkness and heaviness. The two other principles are *rajas* and *tamas.*

sāttvika bhāva Physiological reactions of the body in emotional states, such as perspiration and horripilation or bristling of hairs.

savikalpapratyakṣa Experience involving cognitive construal combined with or superimposed on sensory experience.

śravana Literally, listening. In Advaita Vedānta, *śravana* implies listening to, or the study of, the fundamental principles of Vedānta for the purpose of self-realization.

śreyas Highest Good.

sthāyibhāva Lasting as distinguished from transitory emotions. Bharata's theory of dramatics recognize eight lasting, and therefore basic, emotions.

tamas One of the three components or "strands" of Prakṛti as conceived in Sankhya philosophy, *tamas* is said to be characterized by heaviness, inertia, and darkness. The two others are *sattva* and *rajas.*

tarka Logic, or critical thinking.

triguṇa The triad of qualities, especially *sattva, rajas, and tamas,* conceived as three strands of Prakṛti in Sāṅkhya philosophy.

turīyā Literally, a fourth; in the Upaniṣads and the system of Vedānta, *turīyā* implies the fourth state of consciousness, which is said to be devoid of intentionality or subject–object split and provides direct experience of Ātman-Brahman.

upādhi Adjuncts such as the mind and senses that produce the individuality and "enjoyership" *(bhoktrtvam)* in the individual *(jiva).*

varnasrama dharma The duties of persons according to their station in life in the traditional Indian social system divided into four "castes" and the four stages of the life cycle.

vasānā Desires, especially originating from drives or other inborn tendencies.

vibhāva Cause of emotion.

vikalpa Cognitive differentiation, abstraction, and imagination; also doubt and indecision.

viṣaya Object of awareness, or intentional object.

viṣayin Subject of intentional awareness.

vyabhicāri bhāva Transitory as distinguished from stable or basic emotions. Bharata's theory of dramatics recognizes some 33 transitory emotions.

vyacaharika satta "Practical reality" as perceived by the senses, consensually verified, and explained by reason. In Advaita Vedānta, this level of reality is distinguished from transcendental reality, or *parā sattā.*

Upaniṣad A category of Sanskrit texts considered to be part of the scriptures and known for their philosophical treatment of topics such as the nature of reality and the Self.

yama Restraints such as abstaining from injury and falsehood recommended as the first of eight steps to Yoga. Incidentally, Yama is the name of the Hindu deity who is said to preside over death.

yoga A term that refers to numerous systems of spiritual self-development, including the more commonly known one described in Patañjali aphorisms.

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To the memory of my revered guru,
the late Shri B. R. Ambekar;
and to my most respected teacher,
the late Professor Erik H. Erikson;
great healers who stimulated my thinking about self and identity
in their own different ways.

PREFACE

Some of the common questions that confront all of us are: What does it mean to be a human being? What makes us good and happy persons? And how can we attain happiness, or the highest possible good in life? These are common and yet profound questions that have been answered differently in different societies at different times. In the process of growing up within a specific cultural milieu, we tend to seek answers to deeply personal questions such as "Who am I?" or "What is the best that can happen to me?" in the light of accumulated wisdom of our forebears. As the 20th century draws to a close, the world is rapidly getting smaller, and many of us get exposed to the legacies of several cultures from around the world. The increasing exposure to varied cultures is both an opportunity and a challenge.

Born in India during the colonial days, I was exposed to a highly Anglicized educational system and a completely Eurocentric curriculum. The colonial mold of the Indian educational system has persisted throughout the five decades of the postcolonial era. As a student of philosophy in the mid-1950s, I read such texts as Plato's *Republic*, took courses in metaphysics and ethics shaped by thinkers of the European Enlightment, and earned my Bachelor's degree with a philosophy major without having to learn a single concept of Indian philosophy. Graduate training in psychology in an Indian university in the early 1960s also bore a completely Anglo-American mold, such that the transition to research and teaching in a North American system was easy. Nevertheless, growing up in India inevitably involved exposure to the indigenous intellectual and cultural tradition. My father introduced me to the *Bhagavad-Gitā*, and the nationalistic movement brought home the relevance of traditional Indian ways of life, philosophy, and ideals. The dual cultural heritage of Europe and India became a matter of personal concern and a constant battle when, as an immigrant to Canada, a sense of Indian identity continued to grow in proportion to the constant pressures for assimilation into the Western way of life. This volume is a product of an attempt to make sense of the dual cultural legacy of Europe and India.

Part of the exposure to Western models in psychology was an opportunity to

learn Western theories of human development, first through books while in India and then under the tutelage of the late Professor Erik Erikson at Harvard University. After several years of studying and teaching Western theories of personality and developmental psychology, it began to dawn on me that lessons learned from the Indian tradition were in some ways very similar—and yet in other ways profoundly different—from their Western counterparts. The Eriksonian approach, true to its roots in psychoanalysis and the academic milieu, focused on pathological, as well as normal, ways in which individuals cope with inner and outer changes throughout the life span. Erikson speculated on what remains the same and is untouched by constant flux in a person's passage through the life cycle; he even hinted at the existential significance of the quest for the principle of sameness underlying the continual revision in one's sense of identity. However, in Erikson's work, as in contemporary psychology at large, the deeply philosophical and existential issues about self and identity get routinely excluded as unsuitable to the scientific and academic sphere to which psychology is inextricably bound. In my view, such restriction of the scope of inquiry into the nature of selfhood is an incidental product of the historical and cultural background of contemporary psychology. Such restriction did not apply to self-knowledge as pursued in the Indian tradition and there is no reason to regard such a conventional disciplinary limitation as either necessary or legitimate. Moreover, the philosophical and spiritual aspects of psychological thinking in the Indian tradition complement contemporary psychological thinking and offset some of its serious shortcomings.

Self and identity remain central topics of inquiry in several related disciplines today: philosophy, anthropology, and sociology, along with psychology. The work presented in this volume is allied to, and yet different from, some of the recent publications in this broad field of studies. Consistent with the readership of this literature, which is spread across various disciplines, I have tried to address this book to an interdisciplinary audience. I also presume an international audience spread across the English-speaking world in the East as well as the West.

In terms of its scholarly and historical approach, this book resembles Charles Taylor's *Sources of Self* (Harvard University Press, 1989). In dealing with the concepts of person and identity, and in viewing them from philosophical and psychological angles, it resembles Harré's *Personal Being* (Blackwell, 1983). However, unlike these works, which are framed almost exclusively within the Western cultural conceptual frameworks, the present work tries to integrate Western and Eastern perspectives. In this regard, it strikes a chord with Alan Roland's *In Search of Self in India and Japan* (Princeton University Press, 1988), but it does not adopt his clinical approach. Like Steven Collins's *Selfless Persons* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), it delves into Eastern traditions but deals with psychological issues more than philosophical ones. It shares some of the spiritual and transpersonal concerns of Eastern traditions that such authors as Alan Watts and Ken Wilber address, but it tries to connect more directly and critically with

classical Sanskrit texts and their scholarly interpretations. Like David Loy's *Nonduality* (Yale University Press, 1988) and *Working Emptiness* by Newman Glass (Scholars Press, 1995), this book considers the practice of meditation within the context of postmodern thought, but unlike them it focuses on Advaita Vedāntic, rather than Buddhist, tradition.

Acknowledgments

It has been over 15 years since I prepared the first outline of this book. As could be expected, the project has evolved well beyond the contours that I had envisioned at the beginning. This work would not have seen the light of the day without the facilities provided by Simon Fraser University. The University's sabbatical leave policy allowed me to spend almost 2 years of full-time work on this project at different stages. In 1986, when this project was in its early stages, I was invited to give a series of lectures at the Allahabad University in India. I wish to thank Radhakrishna Naidu, Janak Pandey, R. C. Tripathi, Ajit Dalal, and other friends from Allahabad for giving me valuable opportunities to discuss various ideas. I am very grateful to Krishna S. and Mrs. Leela Arjunwadkar and Ashok Kelkar for guiding me in the right direction and for providing inspiration and encouragement year after year.

Teaching a senior undergraduate seminar in personality at Simon Fraser University gave me an opportunity to discuss a variety of ideas about the self, identity, self-actualization, and self-realization in the classroom. A similar opportunity was provided by a course on self and society that I taught as part of the Graduate Liberal Studies Program at SFU. Numerous students in these classes helped me in articulating my own ideas and often made interesting comments. Although I cannot list the many members of the classes, I wish to thank them all. I must also thank my friends from the Western Canadian Theoretical Psychologists (WCTP) group, who provided intellectual stimulation and encouragement at our annual meetings in beautiful Banff. I have particularly benefitted from my discussions with Vaden House, Don Kuiken, Marvin Macdonald, Tim Rogers, and Hank Stam of the WCTP group.

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Anand C. Paranjpe

Pronunciation and Transliteration of Sanskrit Terms

The transliteration of Sanskrit terms used in this book follows the most commonly used format. What follows is a general guide, rather than a strict phonetic account, of Sanskrit terms transliterated in Roman equivalents.

The vowels are transliterated and pronounced as follows:

a	as *u* in cut	e	as *ay* in say
ā	as *a* in far	ai	somewhat like *ai* in aisle
i	as *i* in fit	o	as *o* in go
ī	as *ee* in see	ou	as *ou* in out
u	as *u* in put	ṁ or ṅ	nasalizes the preceding vowel
ṛ	somewhat like *r* in bird	ḥ	sound like *h* with a sharp exhalation of air

The consonants are generally similar to English with a few exceptions. There is a series of "alviolars" (t, th, d, dh, n) pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the gum ridge, and a series of retroflex sounds (ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ, ḷ) by curling the tongue backward. The ṣ is a similar retroflex. The c sounds like *ch* in chair, j as in *j* in jug, ś like *sh* in shirt, ñ like its equivalent in Spanish señor, and ṅ like *n* in king. The aspirates (kh, gh, ch, jh, ṭh, ḍh, th, dh, ph, and bh) are pronounced with a clearly audible breath following the consonant, for example ṭh as in anthill, and ḍh as in bald-head.

A note of citation of Sanskrit sources: Sanskrit sources cited in the text are indicated by the name of the author followed by the numbers (in parenthesis) of chapter, section, and verse where applicable. The dates of numerous texts of the Indian tradition are not known, or known only approximately, and as such their original dates of publication are not given.

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1

THE CONTEXT OF INQUIRY

THE THEME OF INQUIRY

The nature of self has been a topic of great interest and serious inquiry in the East as well as the West from ancient times to the present. The nature of selfhood was a central topic of inquiry in the Upaniṣads, which are philosophical treatises com posed in India around 1500–600 BCE.[1] In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5), for instance, the sage Yājñavalkya exhorts his wife Maitreyī to contemplate the nature of Self. This injunction parallels its ancient Greek counterpart, "Know thyself." Century after century, some of the best minds of the world have made important contributions to the inquiry into the nature of selfhood. Nevertheless, the riddle is not yet solved; the self continues to be an enigma. In our own times, numerous psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and others continue to contribute to a steady stream of publications about the self. In psychology, where the self had been ostracized during the heyday of behaviorism, the self and identity have returned as popular topics of active research.

The term *self* has acquired varied meanings, and we shall examine some of them in the following chapter. Here, we may begin by simply noting that common meanings of the self involve a variety of answers to a common question, "Who am I?" It is commonplace that this question elicts many different responses from one and the same person, not only at different times in differing contexts, but also at the same time and in the same situation. All of us must have different "selves," depending on who one is dealing with; and despite the radical changes that naturally occur in one's understanding of oneself throughout the life span, one rarely doubts that one continues to be *one* and the *same* "I." In other words, most people tend have an intuitive experience of self-sameness, or a sense of *personal identity*. Although the sense of personal identity is a matter of common experience, serious inquiry has often shown that a firm basis for unity and self-sameness is not easy to establish. The question, "What, if anything, remains the same in a person?" is a profound enigma.

The enigma has elicited two mutually opposed views in both the East and the

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1

The Context of Inquiry

The Theme of Inquiry

The nature of self has been a topic of great interest and serious inquiry in the East as well as the West from ancient times to the present. The nature of selfhood was a central topic of inquiry in the Upaniṣads, which are philosophical treatises com posed in India around 1500–600 BCE.[1] In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5), for instance, the sage Yājñavalkya exhorts his wife Maitreyī to contemplate the nature of Self. This injunction parallels its ancient Greek counterpart, "Know thyself." Century after century, some of the best minds of the world have made important contributions to the inquiry into the nature of selfhood. Nevertheless, the riddle is not yet solved; the self continues to be an enigma. In our own times, numerous psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, and others continue to contribute to a steady stream of publications about the self. In psychology, where the self had been ostracized during the heyday of behaviorism, the self and identity have returned as popular topics of active research.

The term *self* has acquired varied meanings, and we shall examine some of them in the following chapter. Here, we may begin by simply noting that common meanings of the self involve a variety of answers to a common question, "Who am I?" It is commonplace that this question elicts many different responses from one and the same person, not only at different times in differing contexts, but also at the same time and in the same situation. All of us must have different "selves," depending on who one is dealing with; and despite the radical changes that naturally occur in one's understanding of oneself throughout the life span, one rarely doubts that one continues to be *one* and the *same* "I." In other words, most people tend have an intuitive experience of self-sameness, or a sense of *personal identity*. Although the sense of personal identity is a matter of common experience, serious inquiry has often shown that a firm basis for unity and self-sameness is not easy to establish. The question, "What, if anything, remains the same in a person?" is a profound enigma.

The enigma has elicited two mutually opposed views in both the East and the

West. One emphatically affirms some kinds of immutable basis for selfhood, whereas the other equally strongly denies any such basis. Time and again the yea-sayers have proposed a variety of formulations adducing a permanent self, and the nay-sayers have usually come up with fitting statements of denial. In the East, while the school of Advaita Vedānta within the Upaniṣadic tradition has consistently claimed a firm experiential basis for selfhood, numerous schools of Buddhism have equally persistently denied any such basis. In ancient Greece, Pythagoras (ca. 582–507 BC believed strongly in the immortality of the soul, whereas Democritus (ca. 460–370 BC) denied its existence. In 18th century Europe, David Hume claimed that there was no permanent, observable self, whereas Immanuel Kant reasoned in favor of an unchanging transcendental ego. In our own times, the psychologist Erik Erikson has advocated the concept of identity in a spirit that is, as I shall argue later, essentially Kantian. On the opposite side, B. F. Skinner followed the Humean legacy in criticizing the concept of self.

The dialectical interplay of positions for and against the self has enriched the Indian and Western intellectual traditions. Within each hemisphere, the historically accumulated literature on the self and identity is immensely varied and immeasurably vast. Until very recent times the Indian and European intellectual traditions were largely—although not completely—isolated from each other. In the last couple of decades, however, publications attempting to bring together Eastern and Western conceptions of the self have begun to appear in a variety of journals and books. The appearance of these publications indicates a growing interest in the comparison of Eastern and Western perspectives on the self and promises mutual enrichment through constructive criticism. In several previous publications (Paranjpe, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1995b), I have explored some of the parallels and contrasts between Indian and Western views of self and identity. The present work attempts to deal with the same issues, along with some related others in greater depth and detail than in the earlier works.

The natural home for issues like self and identity is the field of "personality" in modern psychology. In contemporary psychology there are numerous theories of personality that provide differing views of human nature. Many of these competing alternatives offer matching perspectives on self and identity. Students of psychology are often bewildered by the variety of viewpoints presented in standard personality texts. A careful comparative study of competing theories, preferably within a broader metatheoretical framework, helps put the differences among their approaches in perspective. Rychlak (1981), for instance, suggests a metatheoretical framework based on the contrasting epistemologies of Lockean empiricism and Kantian rationalism. Such a framework is particularly useful for a systematic comparison of differing views of self and identity, since, as previously noted, Hume and Kant are the leading advocates of the denial and affirmation of self-sameness in human beings, respectively. We shall examine their arguments in the following chapter and review some of the prominent Western conceptions of

self and identity. The Advaita Vedāntic and Buddhist views on the self are dialectical opposites in a manner that roughly parallels the Kantian and Humean alternatives in the West. It would therefore make sense to compare Indian and Western views in relation to these polar opposites. A serious comparative study of apparently similar approaches demands a close look.

Even a preliminary acquaintance with Indian and Western perspectives suggests the possibilities of broader and deeper understanding of person, self, identity, and other such issues of common interest. However, there is a wide gap that separates parallel perspectives that originated centuries and continents apart. Attempting to bridge the gap between them is not an easy task. However, an effort in this direction will be very worth while, since the benefits in terms of self-understanding seem to outweigh the costs. Attempting an East–West convergence should allow us to get the "best of both worlds." Like the fusion of differing perspectives of the right and the left eye that allow depth perception,[2] the blending of East and West can be expected to deepen our understanding of issues of common interest. A systematic comparison of alternative perspectives on common issues requires us to "step out" of each approach, now and then, and attempt to view one in light of the other. In this process, the distinct strengths and weaknesses of the different contributions stand in sharp contrast, and irreconcilable differences as well as deep similarities can be detected. Sometimes the blind spots of one approach are illuminated in the light of the other. Implicit assumptions that are often forgotten–such as the fact that we speak prose or that we breathe air–become explicit. In comparative studies, we can better raise and answer a number of questions than in studies that remain within a single framework.

What are the axiomatic assumptions on which we build our inquiries? Are they not different in different systems of thought? Are there any absolute truths that we must grant? What are the criteria for deciding in the case of conflicting claims that appear in independently developing approaches to common issues? Many of these questions involve epistemological issues that will be addressed as we continue with our comparative study.

There are many difficulties in a comparative inquiry that present themselves from the outset. First, the historically accumulated literatures on self and identity in the Indian and Western intellectual traditions are enormously extensive and varied, and more material is added every day. As such, one has to give up the pretense to know everything and is forced to be selective; the choice of particular ideas to the neglect of others must remain somewhat arbitrary. Second, the differing sociocultural contexts of theories seem to systematically shape them in distinctive ways, and it is difficult to know enough about the contexts and ways in which they may have influenced the perspectives. Neither the nature of the sociocultural context nor the nature of its impact may be known very well for sheer lack of information. Indeed, there is a paucity of literature that examines perspectives on psychology in highly differing sociocultural and historical contexts. Another difficulty in

comparative study is the lack of a common comprehensive framework within which meaningful comparisons can be made. But unless one begins, one would not even recognize the nature of difficulties in psychological understanding across cultures.

Although it seems foolhardy to try to undertake such a difficult task, I find myself dragged into it. Upward of a century of European colonization of Asia has brought the West to the East in a close encounter. For Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936), an Englishman who was born and had lived in India for a long period of time, it had appeared that the twain could never meet. But as the 20th century draws to a close, jumbo jets and communication satellites have brought the East and the West closer together than ever before. Everyone today lives in Marshall McLuhan's "global village" (McLuhan & Powers, 1989). Moreover, for the millions who have migrated from one hemisphere to the other, elements of Eastern and Western worldviews become part of life. In the process of globalization, there are many of us who have binational or integrated cultural identities by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage. Such persons must face the problems arising from the duality of their cultural existence, whether they like it or not. Recently, Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) has called such people "halfies."[3] In my own case, having lived an equal number of decades of my life in India and Canada, and having been exposed about equally to Indian and Western thought, the cross-cultural encounter of ideas is a matter of daily existence. For cultural halfies, ideas become an integral part of one's personality regardless of their origin, and self-understanding and understanding across cultures become inseparably fused. When the problem becomes an integral part of daily life, it can no longer be shunted off as too difficult to deal with; one must face it the best way one can.

One of the problems in the study of the self is that the current inquiry into this issue is divided into disciplinary specialities, particularly anthropology, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, and sociology. These disciplines have their own different mandates, audiences, journals, and rules of discourse. Such disciplinary divisions were unknown to the ancients in the East, as well as the West. Disciplinary divisions often tend to be sharply drawn, whereby some issues are ruled legitimate in some disciplines and not in others. William James, for instance, made a sharp distinction between the self as a "thinker" as opposed to his or her "thoughts," and assigned the former as a "metaphysical" issue fit for the philosopher but unfit for the psychologist. Although advantages of disciplinary specialization are too obvious to disregard, such partitions between metaphysical versus psychological domains pose artificial obstacles in relating perspectives from psychology with those of philosophy. Also, it is common in contemporary psychology to deal with current viewpoints without regard to their historical roots. Such an ahistorical stance is based on the assumption that science progresses by rendering previous steps obsolete, always moving ahead to necessarily improved levels in understanding. This assumption needs to be examined before drawing on

historical sources. Also, the very idea of comparing theories across cultures would seem to implicitly assume and justify different brands of science, such as European psychology as opposed to Icelandic psychology, and so on. Such an assumption flies in the face of the common notion that there is one universal science, which makes indigenous psychologies of various regions appear as ludicrous as Russian physics and Italian chemistry.

Given that the present study intends to draw on ideas across disciplines, historical periods, and cultures, it is necessary to examine the problems arising from attempts to close such gaps. It is also necessary to discuss such issues as the unity of science, absolutism versus relativity of knowledge, univocalism versus pluralism, and so on before beginning with specific views of person, self, and identity. The remainder of the chapter is therefore devoted to the discussion of such issues.

On Closing the Historical, Disciplinary, and Cultural Gaps in the Study of the Self

It is not uncommon in contemporary psychological literature on the self to trace crucial ideas to William James. For many, the history of psychology simply means the history of modern, scientific psychology starting with James; relatively few try to trace the history of psychology back to the Age of Enlightenment, let alone to ancient Greece. It is a matter of common knowledge in the field of psychology that students are expected to make sure their reading lists are current; too many references to work published more than 5 years ago is seen as a sign of being "dated." T. H. Leahey (1987) has rightly chosen the terms *Whig* and *presentism* to characterize the attitudes of contemporary psychologists. "A Whig account of history," says Leahey, "sees history as a series of progressive steps leading up to our current state of enlightenment" (p. 29). The present state of knowledge, or the "state of the art" ostensibly represented by the latest journal articles, is *ipso facto* considered to be the best on earth. Anyone who wants to draw attention to insights of ancient origin must work his or her way against such an antihistorical stance. Ironically, we must turn to the historical origins of presentism itself so as to understand the source of strength behind the Whiggishness of our times.

The Old versus New Models of the Self: Closing the Historical Gap

One specific aspect of the history of European thought that seems to have contributed to presentism is Hegel's view of history. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) viewed knowledge, philosophy, and consciousness–indeed, the entire reality–as perpetually moving forward through the cosmic process of "Becoming." The transformation of a bud into a flower, and then a fruit, is a common instance of

Becoming. It is as if the present state of anything is like a "thesis" that naturally invokes its dialectical opposite, or "antithesis;" the two together inevitably lead to their "synthesis," which forms the new thesis—and the cycle continues. Hegel thought that a prior idea, or thesis, does not just vanish but continues by being embedded in a more evolved form of the syntheses, even as a bud gradually transforms itself into a flower and a fruit. We remember our old thoughts, which are subsumed in our current thoughts to which they have led. Likewise, at the global level, Plato's ideas are subsumed in Aristotle's, which are in turn subsumed into Kant's and Hegel's, and so on. The human mind as well as the cosmic Spirit are in a perpetual process of Becoming, such that there is no return of the present to the past, from the flower to the bud. This view implied a unidirectional view of time that necessarily marches from past through present to the future toward progress.[4]

Auguste Comte (1830/1970) transformed this idea of the historical process of the development of knowledge into a universal law. Comte's "law" suggested that knowledge in any field passes through three successively superior stages of development: theological, metaphysical, and scientific or "positive." What Comte meant by *theological* was animistic thinking that attributes events in nature to the actions and whims of deities that control the wind, rain, and other such phenomena. In the next, *metaphysical* stage, events are explained in terms of causes understood as abstract forces. In the final, *positive* stage, an attempt is made to accurately describe natural events rather than causally explain them, so that knowledge of their regularities can be used to human advantage, as in the case of Galileo's studies of motion. Many modern psychologists seem to assume Comte was right; like B. F. Skinner, they try to accurately describe behavior as a means of establishing control over it, shun metaphysics as a useless endeavor, and either view the self as a dreadful relic of the theologian's "soul" or dismiss it as "a vestige of animism" (see Skinner, 1974, p. 167).

Writing in Germany about a century after Comte enunciated his law of the three stages, Max Scheler (n.d./1970) criticized it, arguing that theological, metaphysical, and scientific are *types* of knowledge rather than *stages* of its development. According to Scheler, the three types rest on three different kinds of human motives and aims, involve three different "groups of acts of the knowing mind," and are relevant to three different personality types. The theological or religious type aims at salvation, involves the hoping, fearing, and loving mind, and addresses the "homo religious" or a saint. By contrast, the metaphysical knowledge aims at wisdom, is motivated by wonder, involves "essence-envisioning" type of reasoning, and is compatible with a sage or an intellectual type of personality. Scientific knowledge, as distinguished from these other types of knowledge, seeks to observe regularities in nature so as to be able to predict and control them, involves observation and inductive and deductive reasoning, and attracts the curious types of persons who are not particularly keen to be heroes or saints. What Scheler's typology suggests is that it is important to raise the issue of "knowledge for what?" In our times, Jürgen Habermas (1968/1971) asked basically the same sort of question and has suggested "critical" and "emancipatory" interests in the search of knowledge as distinguished from the "technical" interest of scientific knowledge. The *emancipatory* interest, as reflected in psychoanalysis, tries to relieve humans from being oppressed by unconscious motives, while in Marxist analysis it aims to emancipate the masses from political and economic exploitation. Habermas points out the irony that Comte's positivism, which tried to make science immune from philosophical critique, itself started as a historical analysis and a philosophical critique of knowledge. Seen from Scheler's or Habermas's point of view, it is important to understand the differing goals that prompt a search for knowledge. Rychlak (1981, pp. 28–29) points out that the different theories of personality in vogue today are guided to greater or lesser degree by scholarly, curative, or "ethical" interest; meaning striving to attain values such as "self-realization." There is a common expression in Sanskrit: "*sā vidyā, yā vimuktaye*," which may be paraphrased to mean that the purpose of knowledge is to seek liberation. This stance stands in sharp contrast with the behaviorist view of psychology aimed at the control of behavior. Given such diversity in their goals, it makes sense to understand theories in terms of their explicit or implicit goals, and to evaluate them in terms of the degree to which they help realize their respective goals. Whether a theory is modern or antique is irrelevant if one wishes to understand and evaluate theories in this manner.

Self-Knowledge and Disciplinary Divisions

Ancient thinkers in both India and Europe did not distinguish between philosophy, psychology, and other disciplines as we currently do. To some extent, the divisions are peaceful territorial arrangements that mark off specific sets of phenomena—the weather, animals, culture, and so on—as legitimate domains of study for specific groups of specialists. Although highly useful and necessary in managing the vast expansion of knowledge, the disciplinary divisions have fractionated the community of scholars into separate groups that are often guarded and fortified in the form of rival academic departments competing for grants and prestige. Even within the domain of the study of the self, specific aspects are delineated as special areas for related disciplines. Thus, the sociologists are supposed to study the social aspects of the self and anthropologists the cultural imprint on it, while social psychologists focus on its interpersonal dimensions, and so on. While such specialization seems to provide more complementarity than conflict, approaches to the problem of identity is fairly sharply divided between the disciplines of philosophy and psychology, and there is little communication between them.

Part of the problem in this regard is a result of the particular history of modern psychology, namely its historical development as a rebel child of philosophy and

its attempt to move close to the natural sciences and away from the humanities. Moreover, J. B. Watson (1913), the father of behaviorism, portrayed philosophy as "armchair speculation," contrasting it with the "science" of psychology, which is dedicated to solving practical problems through behavioral "technology." Such characterization was congenial to the pragmatic Zeitgeist of America, and contributed to the negative image of philosophy among psychologists. Self, like consciousness, was declared out of bounds for the "science" of psychology not only because it was unobservable, but because "idle" speculation about such issues was irrelevant to psychology's practical goal of controlling behavior. Moreover, the intellectual ancestry of postmedieval Western conceptions of the self was the theologian's "soul." Against the background of the long-drawn conflict between the developing science and the Christian church since the days of Galileo's inquisition, for many a modern psychologist the self was too tainted a topic to deserve serious attention.[5] Max Meyer (1922), an early behaviorist, wrote in his introductory psychology text that "Thruout [*sic*] history we find religion being spread by fire and sword, by torture and death. Innumerable human lives were sacrificed in order that souls be saved" (p. 410). As a reaction to this history, Meyer ruled the soul and its ostensible successor, the self, out of bounds for psychology. To emphasize this expulsion, Meyer titled his book, *Psychology of the Other-One*, and decades later, Skinner (1974, p. 13) followed this lead.

Given this background, an antiphilosophical and antireligious stance has been common (although not totally pervasive) in modern psychology. This creates problems in a dialogue on the self between psychologists and philosophers. Psychologists with any connections with religion become deeply suspect in the eyes of many of their colleagues. This situation has obvious implications for any East–West dialogue in psychology, since some of the most important psychological concepts and techniques of Eastern origin were developed by schools of thought closely associated with Buddhism and Hinduism.

To some extent, the separation between philosophical and psychological approaches to self and identity is not illegitimate or totally based on prejudice, insofar as there is a tacit division of labor between them. Thus, while contemporary Western philosophers look at the problem of identity as primarily a puzzle to solve with the help of logic, most psychologists view it as a matter of human experience open to empirical investigation and/or introspective analysis. For instance, in their writings, David Wiggins (1967) and Derek Parfit (1971/1975, 1986) concoct varied scenarios in which brains are transplanted from one person's brain into another's body, someone's memories are accurately replicated, divided into equipotent parts, or transported into another world, and so on. Such thought experiments are inspired by real experiments, such as those of Gazzaniga and Sperry on the bisection of cerebral commissures (Gazzaniga, 1970; Gazzaniga, Bogen, & Sperry, 1962), and often have practical implications for issues in real life. Assume, for instance, that for some strange reason, doctors operate on Mr. A and Mr. B, and transplant their brains in each other's bodies. Assume further that the operations are partly successful, and B's body wakes up with A's memories, but A's body does not wake up. Under these conditions, would B's body speak and act like A, claiming ownership of A's body and expressing intimacy with Mrs. A? Assuming both A and B have life insurance, who will be considered dead and whose survivors can claim whose inheritance? For many a philosopher, such a fictitious example is a means to clarify the role of memory in maintaining a sense of self-sameness. For some others, such as Kathleen Wilkes (1988), the flight of fancy in such thought experiments is useless; we should rather study real people. Psychologists usually have little patience for any discussion of ontological or ethical issues concerning the problem of personal identity; they would rather conduct empirical studies of memory or develop clinical techniques to deal with patients suffering from amnesia.

Indeed, this applied orientation of the modern psychologists makes Yoga and Vedānta more compatible with psychology than "philosophy" as understood in the modern sense; that is, as primarily a logical rather than empirical inquiry with a "pure" as opposed to an "applied" orientation. Yoga and Vedānta are systems of philosophy that deal with ontological and epistemological issues like their Western counterparts. However, they are also different from most systems of Western philosophy in having "applied" components in the form of sophisticated programs for attaining higher levels of fulfillment through profound self-knowledge. Interest in transforming one's own personality distinguishes Vedānta and Yoga from Western models of philosophy. While Vedānta and Yoga prompt personal projects aimed at self-realization, most systems of Western philosophy remain impersonal and purely theoretical enterprises. In this regard, Indian philosophy is somewhat similar to the "cultivation of the self" practiced by Greek and Roman philosophers, as described by Michel Foucault (1984/1986). At any rate, as I have tried to show elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1984), the Advaita Vedāntic model of self-realization parallels Maslow's self-actualization model; both of them present us with somewhat different but complementary ideals of what modern psychologists call "positive mental health" and higher levels of fulfillment (Coan, 1977). As well, Yoga suggests means to realize human potentials in a manner parallel to the psychologists of the "human potential movement" in modern psychology (Otto, 1966; Drury, 1989). Such parallels legitimize the comparison between modern Western psychology and the traditional Indian systems like Yoga and Vedānta regardless of the many differences among them.

The Cross-Cultural Context: On Bridging the East–West Gap

Modern psychology, at least as it is taught in most universities around the world today, is mostly a Western or Euro-American product. Psychology as taught in most third world countries as well as in Japan also bears an indelible Euro-

American stamp. The Eurocentric character of psychology and its attendant limitations in their application to the non-Western world have been known at least since the 1920s, when pioneering anthropologists from Europe and America started to use the Freudian model in their studies of various "primitive" cultures around the world. The anthropologist Malinowski (1927/1953), for instance, complained that Freud's model was inappropriate in understanding matriarchal societies, in that, he argued, children's ambivalent feelings for their fathers typical of Oedipus complex result primarily in European societies where the father is both a provider as well as a disciplinarian. This condition does not obtain in "mother right" societies where the father is not the disciplining authority. If this analysis is correct, then the Freudian view of the pervasive intrapsychic conflict must have limited cross-cultural applicability. Limitations imposed on psychological theories and methods arising from their cultural background should be a matter of concern in cross-cultural psychology, where concepts and methods of Euro-American origin are applied to cultures around the world.

Malinowski was concerned about the bias arising from studying cultures from the vantage point of one's own culture, and recommended that anthropologists try to look at alien cultures from the "native's point of view." In the field of cross-cultural psychology, John Berry (1969) drew the attention of his colleagues to Malinowski's recommendation. Following the distinction between phonemics, which deals with features specific to a language, as opposed to phonetics, which is concerned with the universal features common to all languages, Berry suggested the use of the terms *emic* and *etic* to distinguish, respectively, between the culturally limited versus universal psychological theories. Given the overall focus of contemporary psychology on obtaining quantifiable data with the help of paper-and-pencil tests, the issue of "applicability" is centered mainly around translation, validation, and other methodological issues relating to psychological tests. Although the importance of understanding the world from the native's viewpoint is recognized, its scope is restricted to such specific matters as avoiding obvious misunderstanding of test items. The "variables" to be measured are assumed to be "real" and universal, and their meaning is defined almost exclusively in the context of Euro-American beliefs and values. Rarely does an experimenter dare to ask the subjects what they think of the test or the study as a whole. The cross-cultural psychologists rarely ask their subjects whether the issues under investigation and the methods of study make any sense from the indigenous (i.e., natives') viewpoint. Usually the psychologists of the Third World origins are either already Westernized or make little effort in adopting the worldview of the native culture in looking at the experiment or its theory as a whole. The non-Western people are treated primarily as a large subject pool from which to obtain data, their contribution to psychology being restricted to the role of guinea pigs in testing imposed Eurocentric emics. Psychological insights of non-Western cultures are implicitly assumed to be either nonexistent or protoscientific at the best. Many issues

regarding contemporary cross-cultural psychology have been discussed in detail in recent work (Paranjpe, Ho, & Rieber, 1988), making it unnecessary to discuss them here, except for a historical perspective on the mutual understanding of India and Europe.

The basic problems of cross-cultural understanding are not new; they began when people of one culture started to raid, trade, or communicate with people of other lands. Many of the same age-old general problems of intercultural contact reflect in relatively new forms relevant to the changing conditions. Today's cross-cultural psychologists seem to narrowly focus on problems of their methods of investigation—mostly questionnaires and psychological tests—mostly to the neglect of the other, broader, and more persistent problems. In my opinion, their narrowness of focus results from ahistoricism and "methodolatry" (excessive emphasis on methodology) typical of the investigative practices of contemporary psychology (Danziger, 1990). Notable exceptions to such narrowness are the recent works of Ashish Nandy (1983), Durganand Sinha (1986) and David Ho (1988), all of whom have discussed various aspects of the history of the British empire relevant to psychology in postcolonial societies. Sinha, for instance, points out (as many others before him) that the educational policies of the British Raj as laid down by Macaulay (1835/1972) were effective in inculcating a mentality among educated Indians that held European worldviews in high esteem, often at the expense of indigenous viewpoints on many issues. In an earlier publication (Sinha, 1965), he castigates fellow Indian psychologists for turning their backs on their own cultural heritage. In his work, Ho points out in a blunt manner some of the pernicious aspects of the postcolonial mentality on psychology in modern Asia: the sense of superiority of the colonizing cultures and the reciprocal sense of inferiority of the colonized shared on both sides. He points out how the colonial mentality has survived decades after the colonial rule was dissolved, and how it affects the dialogue among psychologists in the European and Third World societies.

Regardless of the fact that the above-mentioned authors have directly spoken about the effect of the colonial context on the study of psychology, it is my impression that psychologists have remained largely oblivious to the lively debate on postcolonial issues (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1995) prompted by, among others, Edward Said's (1978) influential work entitled *Orientalism*. This discourse could shed light on some of hidden dimensions of cross-cultural studies in psychology. The main issue relevant in this context is the varied ways in which cross-cultural understanding in the late 20th century is shaped by the power differential between the formerly colonized and colonizing cultures. Keeping this broader issue in mind, I shall focus here on how the history of the mutual understanding of India and Europe has affected the nature of psychological studies in India in the postcolonial era. In my view, the recent work of the Indologist Wilhelm Halbfass (1981/1988) is most valuable in placing the issues in the

historical perspective. He has given an overview of the intellectual exchange between India and Europe spanning two and a half millennia in a single volume titled *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*. In the next section, I shall follow his analysis of the history of the transcontinental exchange of ideas.

East–West Dialogue in Historical Perspective

Unlike the oceans that separate the Americas from Europe, there is a large landmass that connects Europe with Asia. Throughout the known history, there has been constant communication across this landmass; numerous people of each generation have traversed on foot or horseback to satisfy their drive for trade, conquest, or proselytization, "sight-seeing," seeking specialized knowledge, and so on. Many of the innumerable traders, soldiers, and travelers must have carried ideas along with their "baggage" to and from their home and lands of yonder. The first significant intellectual link relevant for our purpose is Pythagoras (ca. 582–507 BC), who is said to have had contacts with the East. His views of the self are recognized as having influenced those of Plato, who in turn influenced the "neo-Platonic" philosophers and their followers through the centuries. Plato's ideas of the tripartite soul[6] roughly resemble the Upaniṣadic view of the individual as the knower, agent, and enjoyer/sufferer, and there is some similarity between the philosophers, warriors, and traders of Plato's *Republic* and the Hindu castes (*varṇas*). This is not to suggest either a direct Asian influence on Plato or a very close resemblance between Advaita Vedāntic and Platonic concepts. The tripartite division of human functioning into cognition, affect, and conation has been a persistent theme of both Western and Indian thinking, and will be discussed in separate chapters to come.

The neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (ca. 205–270 CE) provides a clear and more well-known link between the intellectual traditions of India and Europe.[7] His travels to India in search of the "wisdom of the East" are a matter of historical record. Like Pythagoras before him, Plotinus echoes the monistic principle that very closely resembles the Brahman of Vedānta. His contemplative approach and deeply spiritual interests are in tune with several Indian approaches to self-realization. Plotinus's influence on St. Augustine (354–430) is reflected in the introspective approach to spiritual and philosophical matters throughout the Christian tradition that followed him. Augustine's quip, "If I am deceived, so I am," was echoed centuries later by René Descartes's (1596–1650) famous words, "I think, therefore I am." Plotinus's contact with the East suggests an instance of historical exchange of ideas, although the exact nature of the exchange and the degree of mutual influence remains unclear.

A major event that connected ancient India with Greece was the military campaign of Alexander the Great (356–323 BCE) in the northwest region of India. Despite legends of Alexander's conversation with some wise man of India, and despite extensive contacts between the India and Europe occasioned by Alexander's expedition, no significant exchange of ideas seems to have come about via this Greek connection. A deeper and more lasting connection between India and the Western world was established through the Islamic conquerors coming to India from Turkey, Iran, Mongolia, and various other parts of Asia and the Middle East through the northwest passage. The first Islamic campaign goes back to the early 8th century, followed by waves of tribes and armies, some of which stayed on to establish Islamic hegemony over major parts of India for centuries. Among the many dynasties of Islamic rulers, some patronized artists and scholars. Al-Bīrūnī (973–1048 CE), an astronomer, mathematician, and geographer associated with the Turkish conquerer Mahmūd of Ghazanī, was one of the first major scholars to study the Indian world seriously (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 25). The Mogul emperor Akbar (1542–1605) patronized many artists and scholars and took personal interest in their work. Motivated by the aim of consolidating his rule by bridging the religious gap between the Hindus and the Muslims, he tried to create a monotheistic religion based on Islamic, Indian, and Christian elements. But such syncretism was not successful in his own times, let alone in the longer run. Over the centuries, however, many Indian texts were translated into Persian, and some literary classics as well as ideas in astronomy, astrology, medicine, mathematics, and other areas of study were transmitted back and forth between India and Europe via the Middle East. The decimal system of numbers and the game of chess are among many Indian inventions that are known to have been transmitted from India to Europe.

Dārā Shukōh, emperor Akbar's great grandson, had 50 Upaniṣads translated into Persian. The translations included excerpts from commentaries by Śaṅkara, and were completed by 1657. Dārā Shukōh had deep personal interest in and sympathy for the Upaniṣadic philosophy, and attempted to compare and harmonize ideas from Hinduism and Islam in a book entitled *Majma' al-baḥrain* ("Mingling of oceans") (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 34). Such an approach did not sit well with his brother, Aurangzeb. Claiming that Dārā was "a heretic and danger to the state, the faith and the public order," Aurangzeb ordered his brother's execution a few years after the translation project was completed. Such was the fate of a major attempt at mutual understanding across cultures, and religious fanaticism continues to obstruct attempts at reconciliation at present. Fortunately, Dārā's efforts in translations did not go to waste; the finished products were eventually transmitted to Europe, and these were in turn translated into Latin under the title of *Oupnek'hat* by Anquetil Duperron, in 1801–1802. It is this Latin version that reached the hands of Schopenhauer and other European philosophers and elicited great interest in India in the 19th century (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 35).

A more direct contact between India and Europe was established through the sea route reopened by the voyage of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama around 1500. As is well known, the early European voyages to India were moti-

vated by interest in spice trade and in spreading the word of the Gospel. The trading enterprise eventually led to the founding of the British empire, and the nature of mutual understanding between India and Britain during the Raj needs to be considered separately. Before dealing with that issue, it is necessary to examine the way in which the Christian missionaries understood Indian thought. Christianity was introduced in India well before the origin of Papacy, when the apostle St. Thomas is believed to have visited India around 52 CE on the Malabar coast in southern India. A Christian community called the Syrian Christians has lived peacefully and flourished in that area ever since. Serious proselytization began with St. Francis Xavier, the Basque Jesuit missionary in the mid-16th century. Of all the missionaries who worked in India since then, the most important in view of cross-cultural understanding is the Italian Jesuit Roberto de' Nobili (1577–1656).

As noted by Halbfass, Nobili recognized that, if an outsider wants his ideas to be understood by the local people, he must communicate in their language. As he learned to speak and write in Tamil and started to wrestle with translations word by word, he realized that there were some "... basic problems involved in the transmission or transplantation of Christian ideas and concepts into the complex context of Indian religious–philosophical terminology, with its rich associations" (cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 39). Nobili also realized that in understanding an alien culture, it was important to distinguish between its relatively superficial aspects from the deeper ones. In the case of the Hindu culture of his days, for instance, he considered the customs of wearing a sacred thread or a tuft of hair as superficial aspects when compared with the more important one like the Vedāntic monism that underlies pantheistic worship. Nobili recognized that beneath what came across as theistic dogma, "the Brahmanic teachings were a primarily secular, natural wisdom" and that "the rule of the Brahmins and their function, as well as their customs and insignia, were mundane and social in nature"; they were "wise men," not idolators or temple priests (cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 41).

Nobili recommended to his fellow missionaries that the proclaimer of the Gospel must be prepared to "set aside the customs of his homeland and to be an Indian among Indians." According to Halbfass, Nobili defended a "hermeneutic and pedagogic pragmatism, which finds parallels in the Jesuit missions of the Far East, by referring to the 'adaptive' traditions of the church" (p. 41). Halbfass adduces evidence suggesting that, when Nobili communicated his views to Portuguese missionaries and the authorities at the Vatican, their reaction was, despite "certain esteem for his methods," predominantly that of "rejection and hostility." Halbfass's overall assessment of Nobili is that "[h]e had no fundamental questions as to the intercultural communicability of his message ... as much as he was willing to make concessions with respect to ways of life, so little was he able to allow Hindu thought to affect the dogmatic substance of his own Christian convictions" (p. 43).

It would be useful to pause here to reflect on the implications of Nobili's work for the mutual understanding of India and Europe in our own times. Today, as in Nobili's days, it is mostly India that is the target of study from a Eurocentric viewpoint, rather than vice versa. Nobili's willingness to look at the culture as a whole and to sift through superficial details and get down to the fundamental principles of culture provides an important lesson. Such willingness is conspicuously absent in cross-cultural psychology, where researchers seem to be obsessed with the methodological minutiae to the neglect of the "big picture."

Nobili's scholarship on Indian matters began to be known in the Christian circles of Europe during the early years of the Age of Enlightenment. But it was not until the later part of the 18th century that the secular European scholars began to become familiar with Indian thought. A few years prior to the publication of Duperron's Latin translation of the Upaniṣads in 1801–1802, the direct translations of Sanskrit classics into European languages began to appear in England, Germany, and other European countries. By that time, the British traders had already established their presence in Bengal, and their interest in Sanskrit classics had led to the founding of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1874. Wilkin's English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* appeared in 1785, and translations of assorted literary classics began to be published. As is well known, the British "Orientalists" such as W. Jones (1746–1794), C. Wilkins (1749–1836), and T. H. Colebrooke (1765–1837) had positive views about ancient Indian thought, and they helped translate and publicize several Sanskrit texts.

During the late 18th century, many German scholars began to take serious interest in Sanskrit literature. This is rather remarkable in view of the fact that German activities in India were quite limited when compared with those of the British, the French, or the Dutch. Halbfass (1981/1988, p. 69) suggests that, given the increasingly broader and more intensive contacts of Europeans with the non-European world, several European intellectuals of the Age of Enlightenment started to experience a new European self-awareness vis-à-vis alien cultures. This new awareness involved a close acquaintance with and a deep interest in non-European cultural and intellectual traditions, combined with a "motif of criticizing contemporary Christianity and Europe" (p. 69). One of the most prominent among the intellectuals expressing such cultural awareness was the famous German scholar, J. G. Herder (1744–1803).

Herder developed an organic metaphor to understand the development of cultures, suggesting that one mankind developed historically into multiple forms of expression, like one tree trunk developing many branches and twigs. Extending the metaphor of growth, Herder thought of the Oriental cultures as the childhood, Hellenism as adolescence, and the Roman culture as the adulthood of human civilization. The idea that ancient Indian culture represented a pristine state of childlike innocence spread among members of the so-called "Romantic move-

ment" in 19th-century Europe, a movement pioneered by Herder among others. As noted by Halbfass, Herder thought that "[t]he Hindus are the gentlest branch of humanity. They do not with pleasure offend anything that lives ... Moderation and calm, a soft feeling and a silent depth of the soul characterize their work and their pleasure, their morals and mythology, their arts" (Herder's words translated by, and cited in, Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 70). The positive bias of these words is too obvious to need explication. Anyone who knows India should know that, contrary to Herder's impressions, a majority of Indians are not vegetarian, wars and cruelty are not unknown to the Hindus, and unfortunately, the worst forms of indignities were imposed on the untouchables for centuries. Undeserved glorification, although less harmful, is as misguided and stereotypical as the negative forms of prejudice.

Herder was not totally naive about the unflattering aspects of the Hindu society of his times. But he thought of them as manifesting a periodical deterioration of a culture from its pristine state, a temporary downturn. As noted by Halbfass (1981/1988, p. 69), it was common among European intellectuals of the Age of Enlightenment to use "abstract categories of progress and degeneration" while speaking of a society as a whole. To think in such terms was a typical feature of the European self-awareness. "Renaissance," "Reformation," and "Age of Reason" were nothing if not indicative of the march to *progress*—a dominant theme of the modern European culture. The history of this concept has been well chronicled by Bury (1932/1960) in his definitive book, *The Idea of Progress*. As shown by Bury, there were numerous variations of this pervasive theme within the European culture. Regardless of such variations of the theme, the idea of progress has commonly implied a *perpetual* process of improvement.[8]

This typically European theme stands in sharp contrast to the notion of the *cyclical* nature of good and bad times that the Hindus have believed in for ages. Throughout the known history of the Hindu culture, humanity has been assumed to go through cycles of four aeonic periods (called the *yugas*), starting with a golden age, of *satya yuga* (literally, the age of truth), followed by three successive periods (the *tretā*, *dvāpara*, and *kali yuga*) of increasing decline and decay. It is interesting to examine the implications of the concepts of progress and deterioration for the European understanding of India. Herder thought that the chart of human progress goes up and down in different regions at different times and, as noted, he interpreted India to have been in (an ostensibly temporary) period of decline. G. W. F. Hegel (1765–1837), who had become well acquainted with India through the German translations of many Sanskrit texts, had a different interpretation. He believed that humanity's steady and unidirectional progress started with ancient China and traveled through India, Western Asia, Greece, and Rome before finally coming to Germany. He thought that it was in Germany, particularly in his own work, that the progress of humanity had ultimately culminated (Bury, 1932/1960, pp. 253–256; Halbfass, 1981/1988, pp. 84 *ff.*).

Hegel's overall assessment of Indian thought was that, although Indian philosophy was the most advanced in the world in the ancient times, it had nothing to offer to the people of modern Europe. With his overall influence on European thought, this Hegelian view seems to have won popular support. There are some other aspects of Hegel's view of Indian philosophy that need to be considered here. In his view, Indian philosophy is inseparable from religion. He was particularly critical of the Upaniṣadic concept of Brahman, the single principle that is said to account for the entire reality. Said Hegel: "... the One, just because it is contentless and abstract, because it has not its particularizations in itself, lets them fall outside it, lets them escape in *uncontrolled confusion*" (Hegel, cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 89; emphasis added). In Hegel's assessment, Yoga exemplifies a negative attitude of the mind. It negates the dialectical interplay of subject and object, which is of essence in his own view of self-explication of man in history. Also, Yoga manifests "quietism" and "mysticism," which are diametrically opposed to his own orientation. Halbfass identifies some of Hegel's views of Indian thought in choice phrases: "wild excesses of fantasy," an "unrestrained frenzy," and "rampant chaos of mythological and iconographic details" (p. 89). These Hegelian views of India stand in sharp contrast with those of his junior contemporary Schopenhauer (1788–1860), who said after reading Duperron's Latin translation of the Upaniṣads that it offered "the most rewarding and edifying reading ... that could be possible in this world; it has been the solace of my life and will be the solace of my death" (Schopenhauer, cited in Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 106). This was clearly a version of the Romantic idealization of India in Herder's tradition. Halbfass has called Schopenhauer Hegel's "antipode" (p. 106).

Against this background of the diametrically opposed views of India and Indian thought, the ideas of certain authors relevant to the present work may be pointed out here. One of them is Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), who echoed Hegel in considering European civilization as being more advanced than the Chinese and Indian. In *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl (1954/1970) speaks of the "Europeanization of all ... civilizations" (p. 16), specifically mentioning India and China.

According to Husserl (1954/1970), "it was a mistake ... to speak of Indian and Chinese philosophy and science ... in a European way." Although he was convinced that "within their own framework of meaning," their "world-view and world-knowledge remain mythical and practical" (p. 284), Husserl asserted that "only in the Greeks do we have a universal ('cosmological') life-interest in the essentially new form of a purely 'theoretical' attitude" (p. 280). In Husserl's opinion, the purely theoretical spirit, or Greek *theōria*, leads to a universal knowledge of the world, whereas the "vocation-like life-interest" of the "Indian, Chinese and similar 'philosophies' " stifles it (p. 280). What Husserl is speaking of here is similar to what modern psychologists call the "value free" stance of scientific inquiry that is open to and aspires to benefit the whole of humanity.

Husserl's view of presuming the superiority of European thought over Indian is not alien to the contemporary discourse in psychology. For instance, recently the psychologist Harry Triandis (1993) said the following in response to an article by Misra and Gergen (1993) in the *International Journal of Psychology*:

> The argument that contemporary cross-cultural psychology is a Western construction is equivalent to saying that it is science. Modern science is a Western construction. India, when uninfluenced by the West, has produced glorious philosophy and mathematics, but not science. The essence of science is the conversation between theory and data, and the falsification of theory. Traditional Indian culture is incompatible with falsification ... reflections of philosophical monism, make falsification incompatible with its basic values. Therefore, if there is to be an Indian science it has to follow Western patterns (p. 249).

These words not only echo the sense of the unquestionable superiority of "Western science" expressed in the writings of Hegel and Husserl, they also tend to perpetuate the stereotype that Eastern and Western ways of thinking are radically different, with exclusive properties of their own. Triandis's suggestion that the distinction between theory and data or the concept of falsification are Western inventions unknown in India is patently false; like many stereotypes and prejudices it is based on appalling ignorance of the concerned subject matter. As I shall explain in some detail later on in this volume, in India there is a long tradition of sophisticated theories of epistemology in which the principle of falsification is explicit and central. Śaṅkara, for instance, stressed the importance of truth as unfalsified (*abādhita*) cognition as early as the 8th century, a thousand years before the idea of falsificationism was popularized by Sir Karl Popper. It is a supreme irony that Triandis should think of falsification as incompatible with philosophical monism, for it is difficult to find a more committed philosophical monist or a stronger supporter of unfalsified truth than Śaṅkara.

At this point it is necessary to stress that the Husserlian judgment of the superiority of the European civilization is based on his understanding, right or wrong, about the typical European and Indian approaches to knowledge, not on widely perceived technical superiority of the Europeans. It is ironic that, on the one hand, the purely theoretical attitude in the tradition of Greek *theoria* is considered superior to the practical approach of Indian systems like Yoga, while on the other hand European civilization as a whole is considered superior to the Indian because of its successes in practical affairs. Indeed, in the long run, perceptions of superiority and inferiority are shaped more by technical–economic power and political conquest rather than by quaint arguments about excellence of philosophies. As we shall see later in this chapter, typical British attitudes toward Indian thought, as expressed by such British officers as T. B. Macaulay, were shaped not only by the technical superiority of the Europeans, but also by the enormous political power of the British empire. Before turning to that issue, it will be useful to briefly examine the ways in which the Indians viewed the foreigners.

Strange as it may seem, India received more attention and visitors from the outside world than it provided in turn. While the history of the Indian subcontinent provides evidence for a succession of waves of outsiders that came as traders, refugees, or conquerors, there is no record of Indians leaving in hordes to foreign lands before the beginning of the 20th century. Historians speak of the evidence of Indians trading in Egypt and the Mediterranean regions since the ancient times, and there are even occasional references to scholars visiting such areas. Although there is a long history of wars within India, historical accounts of Indian armies marching beyond the northern boundaries of the Indian subcontinent are rare, if any. While foreign travelers to India, like the famous Hsüan-Tsang (ca. 596–664) from China or the Italian Marco Polo (1254–1325), have left behind valuable records of their observations, there are no known records of Indians traveling abroad. Indians have not been known as great seafarers comparable to the Scandinavians and other Europeans, although they probably were well connected to Southeast Asian regions by the sea route for centuries. Interestingly, the influence of Indian culture did spread to a major part of southeast Asia, as is evident in Thailand and Indonesia, particularly Bali. Moreover, Buddhism, which originated in Nepal and once flourished in India, became the major religion in Asia. Many Buddhist monks and scholars have been known to have gone to remote regions of Tibet and the Far East, and some of them translated Buddhist texts into various Asian languages. Emperor Aśoka (3rd century BC) even tried to spread the message of Buddhism through edicts inscribed in Greek and Aramaic. However, the Hindus did not send "missionaries" to the outside world until Swami Vivekananda visited in the United States in 1893 to attend the international conference on religion held in Chicago.

In his survey of the intellectual encounter between India and Europe, Halbfass (1981/1988, p. 172) observes that, while Europeans took the initiative to come to and try understand India, the Indians did little reciprocally; at least this is true for centuries up to the 20th. Halbfass (p. 187) has pointed out instances of "Indocentrism" reflected in "orthodox" Hindu thought. It is widely recognized that through the centuries Indian thinkers learned from foreigners (*mlecchas*) a variety of ideas in astronomy, mathematics, music, and other fields. Although such ideas were incorporated into their repertoire of the sciences, arts, and crafts, Indian thinkers seemed to be keen to avoid any foreign influence on their religious and spiritual ideas. Although Indians accommodated the practice of Christianity in Kerala since one of Christ's apostles, Thomas, visited the southern coast of India, there is little sign of its impact on religious thought in India. Despite Akbar and Dārā Shukōh's efforts in bringing together Islamic and Hindu ideas, and notwithstanding the efforts of saints such as Kabīr to develop amity between Hindus and Muslims, Hindus found little to adopt from Islamic thought. Although Aristotle's ideas were known to the Islamic world, there was no impact of the same on Indian thought through either Greek or Islamic sources. I often wonder why none of the

Greek invaders or visitors could not introduce Plato or Aristotle's ideas into the mainstream of Indian thought, and had they been known to Śaṅkara, how he would have reacted to them. Given the deep impact on European and Christian thought made by Aristotle's works recovered from their Arabic translations, it is tempting to speculate that Śaṅkara's acquaintance with such sources would have made a deep impact on the mutual understanding of India and Europe.

Leaving aside such indulgence in fancy, it would be important to note that numerous Sanskrit scholars who worked in Dārā Shukōh's project of translating the Upaniṣads in Persian, or others who encountered Persian or Arabic scholars, hardly made any reference to foreign ideas in their work. A crucial issue in terms of the mutual understanding between India and Europe is the typical Indian attitudes toward differences in general, and differences between themselves and the foreigners in particular. It appears that the dominant attitude toward differences in philosophical and religious matters is that of tolerance. There are a few observations that speak to this. First, the major religions originating in the Indian subcontinent, whose followers rarely compromised in regard to their doctrinal differences, generally expressed their rivalries in either keen philosophical debates or more constructively in attempting to excel over the rivals in tangible pursuits. For instance, the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains have often built their places of worship next to each other and have tried to architecturally outclass their rivals, rather than destroy each others' temples, as many Muslims did. The doctrinal differences among them often have led to "refereed" philosophical debates among proponents of rival viewpoints rather than bloodletting, as in the case of the Vedāntist Śaṅkara's keenly contested debate with Maṇḍanamiśra, a protagonist of the rival school of (Pūrvā) Mīmāṁsā.

It appears that the typical Indian way of dealing with differences in ways of worship was to create a pantheon that found a place for any number of deities and their uncountable manifestations. An exceptionally rich mythology was created, apparently to unify the diverse deities by portraying them as varied incarnations of a central triad[9] of gods and their consorts. This is how, it seems, that indigenous "tribal" religions as well as immigrant groups from outside were assimilated in a relatively peaceful coexistence of diverse religious practices and "ethnic" subcultures. Moreover, there has been a long tradition of writing concordances of worldviews, or compendia of summaries of a wide variety of "visions" (*darśana*) of the world. Sāyaṇa-Mādhava's (ca. 1295–1386) *Sarvadarśana-saṁgraha* (1978) (literally, a compendium of all "visions" or systems of philosophy) is a well-known example of such compendia. It includes an account of monists and dualists, materialists and idealists, the orthodox and the heterodox, theists as well as atheists, who are unyielding in their insistence on major as well as minor doctrinal differences. But there are no signs in most traditional philosophical literature about the awareness of philosophies of non-Indian origin. Moreover, there are clear examples of prominent scholars expressing contempt for foreign ideas and dismissing them outright.

One such example is Śaṅkara's follower, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, who around the year 1600 may have had contacts with the court of emperor Akbar's court. Halbfass (1981/1988, pp. 186–187) notes that in his work, *Prasthānabheda*, in which he tries to harmonize the different schools of thought of rival paths (*prasthāna*) to liberation, Madhusūdana does not include even the Buddhists, let alone any other worldviews that may have been known to the Sanskrit scholars through the Persian or Chinese scholars. It appears that, as suggested by Halbfass, Madhusūdana seems to simply take for granted that the Buddhist approaches are invalid. I find this ironic, given that Śaṅkara has been called a Buddhist in disguise (*pracchanna Bauddha*) by proponents of rival schools of Vedānta.[10] What, then, could be the reason for such exclusion? As noted, the Hindus were adopting, or seriously considering, foreign ideas in relation to technical matters. Halbfass suggests (pp. 182 *ff*) the most crucial criterion for exclusion of ideas is their relevance for religiomoral issues (covered under the concept of *dharma*) or the "soteriological" matters (i.e., pertaining to *mokṣa*, the liberation of the soul). Surveying the historical reactions of Indians against foreigners, Halbfass (1981/1988) says: "As for the *dharma* and the path to final liberation, there can be no compromise with the *mlecchas*" (p. 186). He quotes the well-known scholar Vācaspatimiśra (ca. 9th–10th century), who heaps the deepest scorn on the *mlecchas* by calling them "scum of mankind and akin to the animals."[11] Indeed, Vācaspatimiśra dismisses the Buddhist doctrines, saying that they cannot be taken seriously simply because they are popular among such lowly creatures as the *mlecchas*.

Halbfass's assessment of Indian attitudes toward foreigners is bound to be controversial, but we need not enter into such a controversy. What is relevant for us here in regard to the hermeneutic encounter between India and the West is the point that Halbfass makes regarding the fundamental significance of India's lack of interest in, and the neglect of, the intellectual horizons of foreigners. Its relevance for the cross-cultural understanding of Indian and Western conceptions of the self should now be clear. First, it is important to recognize that Indocentrism must be recognized to be as deep-rooted and vexatious a problem as Eurocetrism. The long histories of ethnocentric tendencies on both side must be overcome if we aim at genuine mutual understanding. Second, the traditional Indian neglect of alien perspectives makes it difficult to develop a mutual understanding in our times, for it is so much more difficult to bring together streams that have been allowed to drift apart for so many centuries. Third, as we shall see later, the concepts of self and identity that developed in India are most relevant to the goal of the liberation of the soul: the very matter in which Indian scholars seemed to so adamantly avoid foreign influence. Fourth, this very matter, called "soteriological" in the West, has been assigned to theology in the Christian tradition, and theology is a field for which modern academics, particularly psychologists, have cultivated a sense of disdain, if not outright contempt. It is best to try to confront the problems head-on, rather than shove the problems under the rug, so to speak. At any rate, the days

of isolationism on either side seem to be over; there is at least a significant minority of psychologists in both India and the West that is willing to look sympathetically and constructively at the other side.

The era of Indian isolation began to end during the late 18th century, when the British started to establish their influence in Bengal. At the time when the pioneering British Orientalists began to learn Sanskrit, some Indian scholars began to learn English and became closely acquainted with foreign worldviews. This was the first time that Indian intellectuals began to understand themselves in the light of alien perspectives. The most prominent among the Indian intellectuals well versed in alien thought was Rammohan Roy (1772–1833). With the close connections of his family with the Nabob of Bengal, Rammohan learned Persian and Arabic, became familiar with the Koran, and even did some writing in Persian before undertaking a serious study of important Sanskrit texts in Benares. Developing close contact with some of the British officers of the East India Company, he mastered English and became well acquainted with the European thought of his times. His deep knowledge of many languages and religions helped him to see the world very differently when compared with many of his contemporaries, both Indian and British.

Over the years Rammohan became selectively critical of both Hinduism and Hindu customs on the one side, and Christianity and European culture on the other. Thus, he led a social reform movement against the Hindu practices like the *satī*, a custom whereby young widows self-immolated on their husbands' funeral pyre. In recognition of his efforts in reforming the Indian society, Rammohan earned the reputation as the "father of modern India." He criticized idol worship not because of acceptance of Christian or Islamic prohibition of idolatry, but because he found it incompatible with the Upaniṣadic principle of the formless Brahman as absolute truth. Rejecting both Christianity on the one hand and such Hindu practices as idol worship on the other, he started a new religious movement called the *Brahma Samāj*, in 1828. We need not elaborate here on the Hindu revivalist movements like the Brahma Samāj and Swami Dayānanda Saraswatī's *Ārya Samāj*, based on Vedic principles (founded in 1875); we only need to note their common hermeneutic implication: Despite the many differences between them, they manifest anew cultural self-awareness of India based on the indigenous intellectual tradition. Both the Brahma Samāj and Ārya Samāj started to *reinterpret* ancient principles in the new sociocultural context, keeping in mind the increasing influence of the Western worldview.

This should bring us to the establishment of the British hegemony in India across the Indian subcontinent in the early 1800s, and the introduction of a European educational system that completely transformed the Indian culture and intellectual self-understanding. In 1834, the General Committee on Public Education appointed by the British authorities in India was divided between the Orientalists, who argued in favor of Sanskrit and Arabic, as well as English, as the medium

of higher education in India, as opposed to the Anglicists, who wanted only English. As is well known, the Anglicist position espoused by T. B. Macaulay's famous *Minute on Indian Education* won over the Orientalists and shaped the educational system in India throughout the British Raj for over a century.

In his *Minute*, Macaulay (1835/1972) spoke of the "intrinsic superiority of the Western literature" (p. 241) and ridiculed stories of Hindu gods and goddesses. While advocating the teaching of "European science" at the public expense, he dismissed the Orientalist proposal for the inclusion of indigenous traditional learning in the following words: "What we spend on Arabic and Sanskrit colleges is not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth: it is the bounty-money paid to raise up champions of error" (p. 246). Moreover, he proposed that the aim of the British educational policy in India should be to "do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect ..." (p. 249). Macaulay's words are too transparent—indeed, blunt—to need comment. The policies of the British government that they helped define went a long way toward attaining Macaulay's goal. English education *did* create a class of intellectuals who were completely Anglicized and Westernized in their worldviews. Even after 50 years of independence, curricula are based on Eurocentric models. As far as psychology is concerned, most university curricula indicate little awareness of the country's rich intellectual legacy in psychological matters.

Against this background, the name of the philosopher Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (1875–1949) emerges as an outstanding scholar who mastered both Indian and Western philosophy and clearly and forcefully articulated the insidious implications of the common Indian acceptance of British education and its attendant worldview. Speaking to an audience of students in Bengal around 1931, when the Indian movement for political self-determination was in full swing, he cautioned that the uncritical acceptance of the superiority of the British in the sphere of ideas was far more insidious than accepting the political dominance. In his view, ignoring the distinctive intellectual legacy of India would amount to "slavery of the spirit" (Bhattacharyya, 1931/1954, p. 103), which should not be allowed to happen while trying to win political independence. Bhattacharyya did not say this with an Indocentric spirit oblivious to foreign scholarship; indeed, he cautioned his compatriots of blind faith in tradition and obscurantism resulting from it. He was a dedicated scholar who earned great reputation for his mastery of not only classical Indian thought but also of Western philosophy. In particular, he distinguished himself as a foremost authority on Kantian philosophy and he cautioned the hidden dangers in Kant's appeal to universal reason. "It is sometimes forgotten by the advocates of universalism," he said, "that the so-called universalism of reason or of religion is only in the making and cannot be appealed to as an actually established code of universal principles" (Bhattacharyya, 1931/1954, p. 111).[12]

A careful reading of Bhattacharyya's writings makes it clear that he dis-

played a great social psychological insight about the subtle use of ideology in the game of cultural domination. In *Politics of Identity*, Peter du Preez (1980) describes what he calls the "con"—a kind of an ideological con game in which the dominant culture tries to instill a sense of inferiority among people of the culture to help perpetuate its domination. "A con succeeds," says du Preez, "when we manoeuvre others into accepting an identity frame in which they are inferior to us. An identity con is one of the attempts rulers make to substitute symbolic for physical force. Cons are best attempted from positions of power; they survive an equalization of power between the parties for a very brief period, if at all" (p. 73). The only thing wrong with du Preez's analysis, it seems to me, is his estimation of the duration of the effects of a con game, for those of Macaulay's have clearly lasted for about half a century after India became independent. More Indians now send their children voluntarily to English medium schools than in the colonial days, and the teaching and learning of Sanskrit is in a worse state today than it was under the British rule. It is to his great credit that Bhattacharyya was trying to invoke self-respect and confidence in the indigenous intellectual tradition during the days when India was deeply involved in fighting against a demoralizing foreign domination. He rightly cautioned against the subtle use of a call to universal reason as a red herring. This point needs closer analysis.

The call to universalism is as strong today as it was over 60 years ago. Only names have changed; what they then referred to as "universal reason" we now call "unity of science." In the early 1970s, when I began to speak about psychological concepts of Indian origin to my fellow psychologists in India, I was seen as advocating an "Indian psychology." This, I was told, was as ridiculous as Russian physics or Belgian chemistry. Bhattacharyya cautioned us then that universal reason was only a promissory note, not an actuality, and we must now realize that unity of science was a dream of the logical positivists of the 1930s; and it remains a dream even today. The project for a unified science has been abandoned; indeed, the logical positivist movement that launched it has itself been pronounced dead by historians of philosophy (Passmore, 1967, p. 56).[13] It is widely recognized in cross-cultural psychology today that theories of psychology that were presumed to be universal are but Eurocentric emics limited by the culture of their origin (Berry, 1969). However, they also seem to believe that, as they keep testing their imposed emics on various cultures and keep fixing those aspects that prove to be culture specific, one day they will metamorphose into an etic, or universal psychology. Etic psychology is not only a promissory note, like Kantian universal reason and the positivist grand scheme of unified science, but it is a mere dream. It must be a dream because science is not and can never be an island unto itself; it must be part of *some* sociocultural context and be ensconced in its overall worldview. To conceive of a culture-free etic psychology is to think of a being in a boat untouched by the water in which it floats.

In his review of the mutual understanding of India and Europe, Halbfass was acutely aware of the difficulty in, or rather the impossibility of, absolute cultural neutrality. While trying to attain balance in his presentation with a "commitment to, and distance from, the Indian and European sources," he did not want to "pursue the evasive and vacuous goal of absolute neutrality and impartiality." "Our survey," he said, "is itself part of the unfolding and continuing historical and hermeneutical processes with which it deals" (Halbfass, 1981/1988, p. 174). With this realization, it will be useful to examine how the ideal of a culture- and value-free, universal, and univocalist science of psychology arose in the intellectual history of Europe and what philosophers of science think of it today. For it is the notion of a univocal psychology unified with a single body of unified science against which claims to a variety of psychologies—justified on cultural, epistemological, or whatever other grounds—will have to be established. This brings us to the topic of the next section.

Univocalism, Relativism, and Pluralism in Psychological Theory

There is a long history in the Western intellectual tradition of concepts similar to that of the "unity of science." Robert McRae (1973) traces the roots of such ideas to Plato and Aristotle and follows its development up to Kant. He points out a set of common themes around which various thinkers tried from time to time to organize the universe of knowledge into a single unified system: unity of the principles of science, of subject matter, of method, or of its purpose (a teleological unity). Francis Bacon, for instance, tried to unify various fields of knowledge under one subject matter, the laws of nature, and one purpose, namely controlling nature for "the relief of man's estate" (Bacon, 1605/1859a, p. 294). By comparison, Kant tried to unify science on the principle of reason, namely the ostensibly universal "categories of the understanding." The well-known model of the unity of science proposed by Rudolph Carnap (1938/1949) and other members of the Vienna Circle can be seen as the latest version in the long line of approaches identified by McRae. It attempted to blend the rival epistemologies of the British empiricism of Bacon, Locke, and Hume on the one hand, and the Continental rationalism of Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant on the other. The implicit idea that psychology must be a single, universally applicable body of knowledge, which prevails in psychology today, may be viewed against the backdrop of the aforementioned history of ideas in Western thought.

The Univocalist versus Pluralist Approaches to Psychology

Behaviorist approaches to psychology, which developed in a loose alliance with the intellectual movement of logical positivism (Smith, 1986), generally adopted a univocalist stance. J. B. Watson (1913) is perhaps the first one to

emphatically proclaim that psychology must adopt the methods of natural science and no others, and saw it as a branch of the natural sciences. In contrast with this methodological behaviorism of Watson, the philosopher Carl Hempel (1935/1949) suggested "logical behaviorism" based on the argument that the metaphysical distinction between mind and body is false, and that the distinction between natural and human sciences is therefore unnecessary. Rudolph Carnap (1938/1949) argued that the statements of all sciences, including those of psychology, can be translated into, or reduced to, those of physics, and proposed an ambitious program for the unity of science based on this principle of reduction.

It is difficult to find a psychologist who argues as explicitly as Carnap (1932–33/1959) for a univocal psychology to be unified with knowledge modeled after physics. However, S. S. Stevens's (1935) attempt to provide operational definitions of psychological concepts did much to try to translate psychological concepts in the "protocol language" as suggested by the logical positivists. Regardless of the merits of operationism, which remain controversial, operationism became a creed of psychology; it gave the impression to many psychologists that they had finally found a way to bring psychology on a par with physics. Over the years, the Carnapian vision of the unity of science became highly influential, silently reflecting itself in the way in which psychologists perceived the place of their discipline in relation to other disciplines. For instance, in their well-known text on the systems of psychology, Marx and Hillix (1973) place psychology in a hierarchy of disciplines that reduce psychological explanations successively into those of biology, biochemistry, chemistry, and ultimately physics. A model of fields of knowledge ordered hierarchically in a grand scheme of reducing all abstract, molar, and complex systems ultimately to the subatomic level has been relatively invisible, perhaps because it is simply taken for granted. The success of this program of ordering and unifying of scientific knowledge is a debatable issue. Nevertheless, it promoted the univocalist ideal, and the prestige of physics as the "queen of sciences" remained extremely high. It is reflected, for instance, in Thomas Kuhn's (1970) view that psychology's lack of a common theoretical framework indicates its protoscientific status similar to pre-Newtonian physics. Commitment to univocalism and the idealization of physics are more tacit than explicit, but are pervasive. It is against this background that approaches to psychology grounded in particular cultures are denigrated by comparing them to the ludicrous notion of Russian physics or German chemistry.

Notwithstanding the highly cherished ideal of univocalism and unity, the discipline of psychology is in fact hopelessly divided from within. It has been said to be "a melange of sciences, technologies, professions, arts, epistemologies, and philosophies—many of them but distantly related to each other—all called 'Psychology' " (Krech, 1970, quoted in Staats, 1983, p. 235). The disunity of psychology is not only a fact but a matter of great concern to many. According to Staats

(1983), the problem of disunity has reached a crisis proportion. Following Kuhn (1970), he views the lack of unity in psychology as suggestive of its *preparadigmatic* status and proposes several ways for unification. A group is said to have been formed to help unite psychology under a single paradigm. This seems to be a laudable goal, for life would ostensibly be simpler if one language were to replace the cacophony of the many tongues of Babel heard in psychology today.

We need to be cautious in this respect, however, since the logical positivist idea suggesting the language of physics as *the* language for all sciences has clearly failed. The cross-cultural psychologists' attempt to formulate a universal, etic psychology would appear to be a variation of the theme of unification articulated by Carnap and Staats. However, the divisions in psychology that Staats and other unificationists are trying to integrate—behaviorist, cognitive, psychodynamic, Gestalt, and similar other models—have developed within the same Western cultures, not in diverse cultures from around the world. Some, like Allportian and Skinnerian theories of personality, for instance, grew within not only the same cultural milieu, but side by side under a common roof in the same university. The plurality of approaches to psychological theory clearly is not the result of cultural or regional differentiation, but rather of differing commitments of their proponents to different ontologies, epistemologies, values, and goals. A program for unification implicitly modeled after the logical positivist program, for instance, cannot be accomplished by imposing particular ontological and epistemological doctrines.

Given that logical positivism was staunchly opposed to metaphysics, it is indeed very ironic that many positivists were committed to physicalism, which is but a metaphysical doctrine. Ernst Mach (1838–1916), whose ideas inspired many a positivist, was against metaphysics. He adopted a phenomenalist approach that rejected Cartesian metaphysics. He assumed that both "things" and their perceptions are constituted by sensations that are neutral with respect to the ontological categories of mind and matter.[14] Following Mach, Skinner, too, rejected metaphysics. But his constant attacks on "mentalism" (Skinner, 1974), and his insistence on "physical" causes (1953, pp. 29–31) leave him squarely in the physicalist camp. Similarly, Carl Hempel (1935/1949), like other logical positivist followers of Mach, not only rejected metaphysics, but also insisted that "the psycho-physical problem is a pseudo-problem" (p. 380). However, citing the behaviorist J. B. Watson with appreciation, Hempel offered a "logical analysis of psychology," according to which the experience of pain, a "mental event," was to be reduced to its physical concomitants such as weeping, or a "decayed tooth with exposed pulp" (p. 377). This move follows the footsteps of Watson (1913, p. 174), who defined thinking in terms of its bodily concomitants, such as the movements of vocal chords in subvocal speech. The explicit reason for such conceptualization was the nonobservability of thinking in Watson's case and the principle of verifiability in Carnap's case and not their proclaimed allegiance to the metaphysical

category of matter. Regardless of the methodological and epistemological or "logical" reasons cited, the net effect was to implicitly subscribe to a materialist worldview in the tradition of Democritus and Hobbes.

The logical positivists Carnap and Hempel prescribed the use of the language of physics as a means to unify science while conveniently ignoring the needs of various areas of study to develop different "languages" as appropriate for their areas of study. Similarly, the behaviorist Watson (1913) tried to integrate psychology into the natural sciences by adopting the methods (observation, experiment) and goals (prediction and control) of the natural sciences with utter disregard for other legitimate goals for psychological knowledge (emancipation, edification, etc.). The history of philosophy and psychology has shown that the imposition of a particular language or of specific methods and goals does not help the unification of science, nor does it lead to a univocalist psychology. Staats's lamentation over psychology's crisis of disunity suggests that he implicitly recognizes the complete failure of the positivist program. Yet he expects to attain the positivist goal of unification through the same old positivist methods, rather than critically examining the positivist epistemology and considering pluralist alternatives. At any rate, psychologists are not united in following Staat's prescription; there is at least a minority of psychologists in North America who explicitly recognize the failure of a positivist approach and are seeking alternative epistemologies and goals (Tolman, 1992). Their search is guided by several recent trends of thought in the philosophy of science, which deserve to be discussed here.

The Sociology of Knowledge

Scheler (n.d./1970), whom I have referred to earlier in connection with his critique of Comte's Law of Three Stages of the development of knowledge, was one of the pioneers in the development of an intellectual movement in Germany that has come to be known as the *sociology of knowledge*. Its main thesis is that the search for knowledge is essentially a social enterprise that is often limited or otherwise shaped by various aspects of the particular social setting in which it occurs. Scheler, who was aware of the intellectual history of India, noted for instance that Comte's "Law" was limited by what Comte knew about the history of European thought; had he known about India, he most probably would have drawn different conclusions. Mannheim (1929/1936), who is considered the father of the sociology of knowledge, pointed out how the worldview or "ideology" shared by knowledge seekers in any field unwittingly influences the outcome of their inquiry. What is believed to be true by everyone in the society is most often taken for granted without questioning. Such "truths" rarely appear problematic unless unusual events or visiting outsiders point out their dubious character—like the little boy who notices that the king has no clothes on. To help recognize the nature of influence of shared beliefs and values in a community of specialists in a

field of studies, Mannheim prescribed a practical strategy. He suggested that some scholar(s) in the field could move out of their familiar milieu to a different society, learn and adopt an alien worldview, and look back on the original worldview from the newly acquired perspective—like a villager moving back to his home after living in a city for some time. Such a maneuver would point out the blind spots in the former worldview that were not recognized before. Immigrants often stumble over cross-cultural insights if and when they reflect on their native culture or speak to a childhood friend or an old relative.

In the case of the present study, my experience as an immigrant has facilitated a Mannheimian exercise in perspective taking. Occasional visits to the country of origin offer concrete opportunities for carefully listening to relatively un-Westernized natives, for trying to identify the "authentic" indigenous viewpoints in the classical and folk traditions, and for seeking to recognize the unwitting changes in one's own views held prior to migration. To this end, I have repeatedly arranged discussions on specific issues with scholars trained in classical sources in Sanskrit and Pali in the authentic, un-Westernized Indian intellectual tradition. Like an urbanized village boy who goes back and forth between two different perspectives, it is possible for an immigrant to alternate between two worldviews and to critically examine the concepts of one in light of the other. Moreover, I have mentally switched between Eastern and Western perspectives again and again by trying to immerse myself alternately in traditional Sanskrit and Western texts dealing with overlapping or similar issues and by reading Indian and Western news magazines that present differing perspectives on common international news items. Such maneuvers provide plenty of opportunities to conduct the Mannheimian exercise of switching between perspectives of the old village and the new city.

Since the pioneering days of Mannheim to the present day, the sociology of knowledge has grown into a major area of study. In the mid-1970s, Buss (1975) observed that there was an emerging field of the sociology of psychological knowledge and offered a review of the literature published by that time. The social influence on knowledge in any field may be understood in terms of two main sources among others: first, institutions such as universities, granting agencies, and monasteries that support the sustained search for knowledge in particular areas and directions, and second, assumptions and values of dominant themes of culture that provide powerful ideational context shaping theoretical models. That policies of granting agencies shape our research by selective funding is a commonly known fact of our times. Today's psychological research is also shaped by the needs and demands of students and teachers in universities where much of the research is done. For the purpose of the present study, it is important to note that the contemplative search for the inner reaches of selfhood was supported over centuries in India by a variety of social customs and institutions such as *āśramas*, which were probably akin to the medieval monasteries of Europe. The insights of St.

Augustine and of Śaṅkara, who lived monastic lives, are quite likely to be different from those of modern academics who work in remarkably different settings. While we can appreciate and understand the differences arising from differing sociocultural contexts, we need not assume that they must be necessarily irrelevant to each other. The psychologist John Crook has tried to show how the insights of medieval Tibetan Buddhist monks are relevant to the modern analytical philosophy of A. J. Ayer, and even to ordinary folk in the busy streets of London in the late 20th century (see Crook & Rabgyas, 1988). In the current era of globalization, the Dalai Lama can engage in a meaningful conversation with postmodern psychologists of the Western world. Such cross-cultural dialogues offer unique opportunities for overcoming the limits on self-understanding often imposed by sociocultural context of inquiry, and thereby moving toward a more comprehensive understanding of the self.

Let me now turn to the themes of culture that, in my opinion, deeply affect the search for psychological knowledge. In an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1984), I had identified the following as issues in psychology where, in my opinion, the influence of cultural context is often deep and pervasive:

1. The assumption about the lawfulness of nature.
2. Assumptions or ontological doctrines borrowed from philosophy.
3. Attitudes about the relationship of human beings with nature.
4. Assumptions about human nature.
5. Assumptions about the human condition.
6. Values concerning the desirable human condition.

It is not necessary to repeat the discussion of these issues. The relevance of ontological categories like mind and matter for contemporary psychology has been noted above, and we shall return to this issue later on as appropriate to topics such as emotion and human agency. The various themes just listed will be discussed throughout the volume wherever they are appropriate.

The sociology of knowledge primarily examines knowledge in a given field in the sociocultural context of inquiry. Seen from such a contextualist viewpoint, knowledge appears to be always *relative* and not absolute. The relativistic implications of the sociology of knowledge militate against the absolutist notions that have prevailed ever since the natural sciences began to dominate the Western worldview. Mannheim, one of the founders of the sociology of knowledge, was acutely aware of the charge of relativism against his position, and discussed it extensively in his pioneering work, *Ideology and Utopia*. Over the past several decades, the sociology of knowledge has been heavily criticized for its relativism by many, Sir Karl Popper (1945/1967) being one of the most prominent among them.[15] The issue of relativism has recently emerged at the center stage with the advent of postmodernism.[16] Although it is not necessary to discuss this issue in all its ramifications, it is necessary to speak to several aspects of the controversy over absolutism and relativism that are relevant to the discussion of selfhood in a cross-cultural context.

The "Requirement of Absoluteness" and the Decontextualization of the Search for Knowledge

Charles Taylor (1980) has traced the origins of absolutism in natural science to the "requirement of absoluteness" that developed as a guideline for the study of nature in Europe's Age of Enlightenment. He describes this requirement in the following way: "the task of science is to give an account of the world as it is independently of the meanings it might have for human subjects, or for how it figures in their experience" (p. 31). Let me illustrate this by borrowing a typical example often used in recent literature: From the point of view of a scientist, a piece of chalk is a brittle object of a particular size and shape, which is to be understood in terms of its physical properties and chemical composition. The fact that the same object is experienced differently by different persons—by a teacher as something to write with on the board, and by a mischievous student as a ballistic missile, for instance—is irrelevant from the scientific viewpoint. Indeed, the success of science lies greatly in expunging from ordinary processes of knowing the "desirability terms" that we normally attribute to objects in our world—as useful or useless, or as good, bad or indifferent, and so on.

In the early stages of the development of science in general, and of the empiricist epistemology in particular, a sharp distinction was often made between what is *given* in experience and what is *added* by the mind. The idea was to focus on only what is given and to meticulously purge everything that is added. While such sanitization of perception is useful, even necessary, in understanding objects *qua* objects, it becomes an impediment in understanding persons. For, as it should be quite clear, persons are not objects by definition. As Taylor (1980, p. 32) puts it, to understand a person is "to understand his [*sic*] emotions, his aspirations, what he finds admirable and compatible, what he loathes, what he yearns for, and so on." To put it in other words, it is natural for human beings to *interpret* the nature of the world around them. To understand human beings is to understand their interpretations, which is exactly what the scientific methods tries to avoid, or at least to keep to a minimum. This is why Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) made a clear distinction between the sciences of man, or *Geisteswissenschaften*, which must be essentially interpretive in their approach and focus on "understanding" (*Verstehen*, in German), and *Naturwissenschaften*, which must follow the "requirement of absoluteness" (Dilthey, 1976).

It is these kinds of divisions of knowledge, among others, that the logical positivists were trying to obliterate in their project for unified science. One of the ways in which they tried to accomplish this was to *decontextualize* the process of knowing from its social as well as personal and psychological setting. Carnap

(1938/1949), for instance, insisted that "[i]t is possible to abstract in an analysis of the statements of science from the persons asserting the statements and from the psychological and sociological conditions of such assertions" (p. 408). It may not only be possible but also necessary at times to separate statements from their context so as to focus on their logic; indeed, decontextualization is a means to fulfill the requirement of *absoluteness* as opposed to *relativity*. But statements are often inextricably embedded in a web of interconnections so as to make sense of a person, situation, or society as a whole, and it is essential to understand them in terms of whole worldview within which they make sense. In general, absoluteness is attained through focusing on some specific part of what there is to understand, preferably on the smallest possible element. For example, the logical positivists preferred to focus on a single proposition, or a "logical atom," at a time, while the behaviorists prefer to focus on a single "variable" at a time. By sharp contrast, the sociologist of knowledge adopts a holistic viewpoint, as in Mannheim's example of comparing rural versus urban perspectives on common issues in life. In the present work, we are attempting to examine the issues of self and identity in the context of persons for whom they may be relevant, in terms of the psychological processes and concerns where they originate, and in the historical and cultural contexts in which they arise, grow, and change.

The Mirror Metaphor and the Foundationist View of Knowledge

In the history of Europe, two distinctive views of the nature, origin, and development of knowledge emerged: British empiricism and Continental rationalism. They often competed and sometimes collaborated, together shaping the modernist phase of the development of Western thought. In empiricism, knowledge was viewed as arising from and validated through *experience*; in rationalism, both origin and validation were ascribed to *reason*. While in empiricism knowledge has generally been viewed as a copy of reality, in rationalism it is often viewed as a construction. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Richard Rorty (1979) has argued that implicit in the empiricist epistemology is the metaphor of the mind as a mirror, or the "glassy essence" of humans, in which the world is reflected. Francis Bacon, the founder of British empiricism, explicitly used the mirror metaphor. In *Novum Organum* (Book I, aphorism XLI), Bacon said: "[T]he human understanding is like a false mirror, which, receiving rays irregularly, distorts and discolors the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it" (1620/1905, p. 264). He then went on to describe various "idols" of the mind, i.e., errors and presuppositions, such as "dogmas of philosophies" and their "wrong laws of demonstration" that becloud the mirror and distort the images. The Baconian program of science involved an attempt to cleanse the mirror by ridding it of all the accumulated dirt, such as dogmas of the past, so that an accurate image of reality can be obtained on its spotless surface.

Following Bacon, John Locke (1690/1959) thought of the mind as a blank

slate, or more precisely as an "empty cabinet" (Vol. 1, p. 48),[17] in which knowledge arises by way of "simple ideas" such as green, blue, rough, smooth, and the like that reflect the properties of objects in the world. Simple ideas that are "given in experience" are the basic building blocks or "materials" from which the entire superstructure of knowledge is built. Those ideas that are presented in experience close together and repeatedly become connected in the mind so as to develop complex ideas. For example, such simple ideas as pink, soft, and moist may combine to produce the complex idea of a rose, and so on. Developing empiricism on the basis of this lead, David Hume (1739/1978) pointed out that "[w]hen any phaenomena are constantly and invariably conjoin'd together they acquire such a connexion in *imagination*" (p. 403, emphasis added). In other words, when the mind is repeatedly exposed to events like the motion of a billiard ball following from an impact of another ball, it forms a habit of expecting that objects *must* move whenever hit by another object. This is how the notion of cause originates. Hume very perceptively observed that such ideas as "cause" or "necessity" (i.e., that relevant effects must necessarily follow causes) are not given in experience; they are added by the mind. Since there is nothing given in experience that would guarantee that objects must always and necessarily move whenever hit, Hume became skeptical about notions like cause. This logical outcome of the empiricist viewpoint struck at the very base of the newly developing Newtonian science, since it depended heavily on empirical evidence and the idea of causality. It is due to this blow against Newtonian science that Kant was "awakened from his slumber" and set out to rescue it from the eclipse of Humean skepticism.

While Kant agreed with Hume that knowledge originates in experience, he could not agree with Hume in viewing experience as the *only* source for validation of knowledge. He shifted his focus from Lockean simple ideas or "intuitions" originating in perceptual experience as the only constituents of knowledge and added concepts and propositions as equally important ingredients. He proposed that basic concepts like cause and effect, necessity versus contingency, unity and plurality, and so on are not added by the mind; the mind is equipped with them from the start. Concepts such as cause and effect, or one and many are "categories of the understanding." They exist *a priori*, i.e., prior to experience, as "standard equipment" of human minds, so to speak. It is the prior possession of the categories of the understanding that make it possible to have a meaningful experience. If the mind were merely a blank and inert mirror that accurately reflects the objects placed in front of it, it would not make sense of the surrounding world any more than a camera that knows no difference between the pictures of a donkey and a celebrity. The Kantian categories of the understanding help us to *organize* the information provided by the senses so that it makes sense. The mind must actively construct meanings out of raw experience with the help of rational categories or concepts, for, as Kant put it, "intuitions without concepts are blind."[18]

As noted by Rorty (1979, Ch. 3), Kant's contribution advanced as it deepened

the mirror metaphor, for it implied that concepts and propositions were *representations* of the world even as the Lockean simple and complex ideas were. From this viewpoint the entire field of knowledge is seen as an assemblage of accurate representations. There are two major components here: ideas that directly reflect objects plus connections among such ideas (Hume), or truths of fact and truths of reason (Leibniz), or synthetic and analytic truths (Kant). When Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) invented modern logic, he was suggesting laws of connecting ideas or symbols that were ostensibly *isomorphic* with the actual connections among entities existing in the real world, and the stage was set for deepening the mirror metaphor.[19] In Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* (1921/1974, pp. 8 *ff*), I find a good expression of the mirror metaphor that Rorty has analyzed. Wittgenstein speaks of a "picture" as a "model of reality" that "represents a possible situation in logical space" and is constituted by "elements" that are connected with one another "in a determinate way."

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Richard Rorty (1979) has shown how, over the years, the metaphor of a *foundation* for knowledge has tagged along after the mirror metaphor. While the mirror metaphor follows from the idea of knowledge as accurate representation, the metaphor of foundation implies that knowledge in any field of studies is, or should be, a superstructure that rests on two unshakable pillars: first, a set of privileged descriptions whose accuracy cannot be doubted, and second, a set of privileged propositions or ideas whose justification is beyond impeachment. The first pillar supports the notion of knowledge as a matter of relationship between a statement and the object which it describes. If someone doubts my statement that this piece of flint is solid, all I need to do is ask that person to hold that piece between his hands and press them, which should stop all such doubting. This view of knowledge comes straight from the history of British empiricism. In his famous *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke said: "If one asks me, *What this solidity is*, I send him to his senses to inform him. Let him put a flint or a football between his hands, and then endeavor to join them, and he will know" (1690/1959, Vol. 1, p. 156, italics original). The direct experience of the object would be so compelling that it would be silly to doubt the accuracy of my description.

The second pillar supports the view of knowledge as a matter of relationship of one proposition with another; it belongs to the "logical space" where logic or reasoning provides meaningful connections between propositions or syllogisms. If someone challenges my argument, I would justify it by giving another, more plausible argument from which the first one follows. If you challenge the second, I might give a third one and so on. But this infinite regress from one statement to another and yet another would have to stop somewhere–preferably at a point where the statement is so self-evident that it would be meaningless to challenge it. An example from Kant's (1781/1966) *Critique of Pure Reason* would illustrate this. In support of the notion of the continued existence of the self-as-knower, he

pointed out that it is simply absurd to suggest that one who claims to know anything does not exist in the first place or to think that a knower who changes from one moment to another would ever get to know anything. In both the instances, where one doubts either the correctness of the description of an object, or the meaning and validity of what is said, one would ultimately arrive at "a situation in which argument would be not just silly but impossible, for anyone gripped by the object in the required way will be *unable* to do doubt or see an alternative. To reach that point is to reach the foundations of knowledge" (Rorty, 1979, p. 159, emphasis original).

Challenges to the Foundationist Views of Knowledge

The cornerstones of foundationism are atomism, reductionism, and the fundamental distinction between truths of fact versus truths of reason (or synthetic versus analytic truths). Both atomism and reductionism as well as the synthetic–analytic distinction have come under heavy attack over the past few decades. It is neither necessary nor possible to examine the increasingly blurry distinction between synthetic and analytic truths and the parallel distinction between facts "given in experience" and interpretations "added by the mind." Many of us would hesitate to put it as bluntly as Nietzsche, who said that there are no facts, only interpretations; but serious doubts have been raised about the fundamental assumption of empiricism that what is "given" in experience is "self-authenticating." Wilfrid Sellars (1963, p. 169), for instance, speaks of the "myth of the given." "For the given, in epistemological tradition," he says, "is what is *taken* by these self-authenticating episodes." Opposing the doctrine of the self-authentication of the "given" by its antonym "taken" is not a mere play on words. That the mind "actively seeks out" rather than "passively receives" information is a very old idea. The only difference between the old and new thinking on this matter is that now it is a respectable successor to the British empiricist tradition who is saying this. Thus, Sellars (1963, p. 1) makes a crucial distinction between "knowing *that*" versus "knowing *how*," indicating the passive character of knowing or understanding that "water supports my body," as opposed to the active character of knowing "how to swim." Sellars pokes fun at the static character of the metaphor of the foundation, saying that it forces us to choose between two alternative images: "the picture of an elephant which rests on a tortoise (What supports the tortoise?) and the picture of a great Hegelian serpent of knowledge with its tail in its mouth (Where does it begin?)" (p. 170). Empirical or scientific knowledge, he suggests, "is rational, not because it has a *foundation*, but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put *any* claim in jeopardy, though not *all* at once (emphasis original, p. 170).

Rorty (1979) rightly chooses W. V. O. Quine as the other major critic of the rational–empiricist view of knowledge. Quine's well-known essay titled "Two

Dogmas of Empiricism" (1953/1964) offers a devastating criticism of empiricism, or rather, of the rational–empiricist epistemology of the logical positivists. He directs his attack on the atomist and reductionist idea that the validity of scientific knowledge is based on specific observations of what is given in experience and on particular (in Rorty's terms "foundational") statements in the form of "logical laws." According to Quine (1953/1964, p. 42), "the unit of empirical significance is the whole science." What matters is the total picture, whose authenticity does not depend on the accuracy of so-called foundational elements. He conveys the holistic character of knowledge with the following metaphor: "total science is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience" (p. 42). The holistic and dynamic nature of a field of force stands in sharp contrast with the static and inert character of, respectively, foundation and mirror metaphors. Insofar as the metaphor of foundation suggests its immovability (i.e., the apparent finality or unalterable character of the foundational statements underlying a theory), Quine has the following to say: "Any statement can be held true come what may, if we make drastic enough adjustments in the system.... Conversely, by the same token, no statement is immune to revision" (p. 43).

Both Sellars and Quine thus envision science as an open field in which statements are forever revisable, not as a fixed set of statements that rest on some immovable foundation. This view resembles the Popperian vision of science as a discourse where one can make unbridled conjectures that are forever and completely open to refutation. It also resembles the hermeneutic principle of the "hermeneutic circle" according to which it is the structured relations of the whole and not the elements themselves that convey meaning—like the words in a sentence or characters and events in a play. Also, the "forever revisable" nature of statements in science may be likened to the hermeneutic principle that all interpretations are forever open to reinterpretation. In Rorty's words, "a necessary truth is just a statement such that nobody has given us any interesting alternative which would lead us to question it" (1979, p. 175). Interestingly, this view closely parallels the Advaita Vedāntic view that knowing implies having a not-yet-falsified cognitive state that is shaped in the image of an object.[20]

Knowledge as Justified Belief

According to Rorty, there is more to knowledge than accurate representation, a view central to the epistemology based on the mirror metaphor. The reflection of reality in our minds can be misleading, even as perceptual illusions like a stick dipped in water that appears bent in water, or the rope that appears like a snake, to take the favorite example of the Advaita Vedāntists. Even where the mental image corresponds closely with the object it represents, we need to ascertain with confidence the veridicality of our impressions. To put it in Rorty's words, "we

understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief, and thus have no need to view it as accuracy of presentation" (Rorty, 1979, p. 170).

The notion of the "justification of a thesis" goes back to Carnap's *Logical Structure of the World* (1928/1967, p. vii). The basic idea here is that only the *justified* theses and propositions qualify as knowledge. The distinction that Hans Reichenbach (1938), a logical positivist, made between the "context of discovery" and the "context of justification" (p. 382) is crucial here.[21] The former implies the activities of science involved in the discovery of scientific ideas, including psychological processes of observing and thinking. The latter, the context of justification, includes all the factors involved in justifying the claim that may have been arrived at in the process of observing and thinking: testing or verification of the claim by empirical methods such as an experiment, ascertaining the relevance and coherence of the claim in light of other relatable claims, and so on. The numerous emotional and irrational factors involved in the psychological processes of discovery are recognized, and these must be guarded against, or "filtered out." Justification is the process in which such filtering is accomplished. As Carnap (1928/1967) put it: "The *justification*, however, has to take place before the forum of the understanding; here we must not refer to our intuition or emotional needs" (p. xvii).

The point to note here is that the "forum of understanding" before which justification has to take place is not the individual but the *community* of scientists.[22] As argued by Rorty (1979), "justification is not a matter of a special relation between ideas (or words) and objects, but of conversation, of social practice" (p. 170). It would argue that the moment the *social* nature of the process of justification is recognized, many of the principles of the sociology of knowledge come into the picture. Thomas Kuhn's view that the search for scientific knowledge occurs in *communities* of specialists who share a paradigm is relevant in this connection, and that is what we turn to at this point.

Psychology and Kuhnian Paradigms

Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) has helped us realize that, at its cutting edge, scientific inquiry occurs in highly specialized groups that share a *paradigm*, i.e., a disciplinary matrix or a framework of inquiry that defines appropriate problems to solve and provides exemplars or model solutions. The concept of the paradigm has been criticized for its multiple connotations; it is true that Kuhn uses it to mean a community of specialists, as well as their shared beliefs, values, and methodology—all at once (Masterman, 1970). Regardless of such ambiguity and its attendant problems, the composite nature of the paradigm nevertheless points out that scientific inquiry is in fact a social enterprise that requires not only a community of specialists, but also a shared cognitive

framework. In the "forum of understanding" before which a Carnap would want scientific claims justified, there must be both these elements present: a number of specialists *and* a cognitive framework that they share. Leaving aside the controversies over Kuhn's concept of paradigms and paradigm shifts through scientific revolutions (see Lakatos and Musgrave, 1970), let us see how these concepts apply to psychology in general and to self-understanding in particular.

According to Kuhn, the diversity of approaches to issues in contemporary psychology is indicative of its preparadigmatic, protoscientific character. In the future when psychology would mature as a scientific discipline, it will have acquired a single common paradigm, even as physics did at its stage of maturity attained through the revolutionary work of Isaak Newton (1642–1727). In other words, a univocalist approach should be psychology's legitimate goal. Whatever differences Kuhn may have with the logical positivists, he shares with them the view that physics is the queen of sciences, a standard against which all other sciences must be compared. This "physics-envy"[23] is bad for the healthy growth of psychology, for it must develop methods and standards appropriate to its own subject matter. Unlike physics, which excludes the scientist from its subject matter, psychology, which studies people, must include scientists—their behavior, values, and so forth—in its subject matter. The psychologist simply cannot observe, experiment with, or control people in the same way as the physicists study or control objects in nature. While atoms and forces do not try to protect their privacy, the subjects in the laboratories or the patients in clinics who psychologists study often try to hide their feelings, protect their privacy or other rights, and sometimes try to please or even cheat psychologists for their own reasons, good or bad. It is of course possible to study people as physical entities moving in space, which of course they are, but only in part. As noted previously, to understand people is to understand their viewpoints, hopes, and fears. If so, the psychologist who wants to understand people in this sense of understanding should be willing to hear what they say and be ready to interpret what they mean.

To put it in other words, Kuhn's suggestion that psychology should have a single paradigm like physics raises the same old issue as denying the place of psychology in the highly interpretive disciplines of the humanities and assigning it to the ostensibly noninterpretive natural sciences. Ironically, it is Kuhn's own work that recognizes the importance of interpretation in the natural sciences, for, after all, scientific revolutions are brought about mainly by offering a new interpretation of the same old sets of facts. Moreover, in *The Essential Tension*, published several years after his earlier work on scientific revolutions, Kuhn (1977) speaks of his "discovery of hermeneutics" (p. xiii). Once it is admitted that interpretation plays an important role in the pursuit of knowledge within as well as outside of the natural sciences, univocalism gets muted. Doors are then open for pluralism, since the same facts are admittedly open to new, alternative interpretations and perspectives even as they are during revolutionary periods. Indeed, in the

1970 postscript to the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn discusses the issue of relativism, which we will briefly examine later in this chapter.

As suggested earlier, an attempt to cast psychology in a monoparadigmatic mold, like physics, has problems primarily due to the essential differences between the subject matter of physics and psychology. When we turn to self-knowledge, the concept of paradigms becomes even more problematic. While in physics the scientist is the interpreter of inert matter, in psychology he or she is the interpreter of those who are also interpreters in their own right. In the study of the self, which is itself considered a "theory" (or an interpretation) of who one is, the self becomes both the object of study as well as the basic means with which to study it. The issue here is that of the difficulty in dividing the self into both the object studied and the subject studying it at the same time. Comte, the founder of positivism, had argued as early as 1882 that the method of introspection was impossible because "[t]he thinker cannot divide himself into two, of whom one reasons whilst the other observes him reason." William James quotes the above words in his discussion of the "methods and snares of psychology" in his *Principles* (1890/1983, p. 188). Eons earlier, the ancient Upaniṣadic thinker Yājñavalkya posed the same sort of a question: "Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All?" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 2.4.14). This sort of question cannot be answered in the natural science context in which Kuhnian views developed, because the natural science perspective is essentially *extraspective*. The study of the self raises epistemological issues that are beyond the scope of contemporary philosophy of science, and this is the kind of area in which some of the Eastern traditions have much to offer.

The Rise of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, as a theory of the interpretation of meaning, originated from *exegesis*, meaning attempts at critical interpretation of scriptural texts such as the Bible. Although in the ancient times exegesis was focused on the scriptures, the principles of interpretation that developed in that context are now recognized as being commonly applicable to nonscriptural texts: legal, literary, historical, archival, personal documents, and so on. In more recent times, Martin Heidegger, and his student Hans Georg Gadamer, have been particularly influential in pointing out the relevance of hermeneutics in the entire area of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, or the human and social sciences.

Unlike the predominantly atomistic and reductionistic approaches common to the natural sciences, the hermeneutic approach is unmistakably holistic. As noted, one of the basic principles of hermeneutics, the "hermeneutic circle," suggests that meanings arise from mutual relationships between the parts and the whole. As in the standard example cited before, it is words in proper syntax, or characters and events in the story or play as a whole, that make sense *together*, not

when taken one by one. Another well-known principle of hermeneutics states that "there is no understanding without preunderstanding." What this means is that, to be able to make sense of anything—whether a new text, language, culture, acquaintance, or what have you—one needs to have *some* prior basis from which to proceed. In the case of a new language of which one knows not a single word, an identifiable sound heard repeatedly in conjunction with some common gesture or grimace might begin to make sense, perhaps as a word possibly meaning disapproval. Assuming that it means "no," the listener might relate it to another sound combined with a gesture pointing at the door, and might guess that what is being said means "don't go that way." Thus, the first step would involve some conjecture about an ostensibly universal meaning of the gesture from which the listener's process of understanding might begin. Each step would add to the spiraling process of increments in levels of preunderstanding and subsequent understanding. At each step there is a movement back and forth between preunderstanding and new information, between the new element added and the total pool of knowledge acquired that far. The holistic, relational, and dynamic aspects of understanding emphasized in the hermeneutic approach are often ignored in the conventional approach to learning commonly found in the experimental and behavioristically oriented tradition of Ebbinghaus (1850–1909) and Skinner.

According to Gadamer (1960/1975, pp. 269–270), to engage in conversation with a stranger in order to get to know her or him is to discover the stranger's standpoint and horizon. The concepts of *standpoint* and *horizon* are distinctly holistic concepts that imply overall perspective, stance, and other subtle aspects of mutual understanding and interpretation. If the two persons engaging in a conversation belong to different cultures, communities, or generations, the horizons of both parties are likely to start expanding. Getting to know members of another culture better enables us to see the world from a perspective not available within the horizons of our native culture. The implications of this explanation of some elementary concepts of hermeneutics for understanding psychological thought in an unfamiliar culture should be obvious.

The more recent work of Gadamer, Ricouer, Habermas, and other scholars has started a hermeneutic "movement" that is now spreading to various branches of the humanities from literary criticism through law and communication to psychology. Although classical psychoanalysis did not explicitly recognize the principles of hermeneutics, the implicitly hermeneutic nature of psychoanalysis has been recognized since at least as early as the 1950s. In *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition*, David Bakan (1958, p. 247) tried to show that Freud wished to suggest, consciously or unconsciously, that "the analysis of a person is like the analysis of Torah," Torah being the books of the Bible that describe the Law of Moses. This suggests the metaphor of the person as a *text*, which manifests in the form of the written reports of that person's dream, case history, autobiography, biography, and similar documents by or about that person. Bakan (1958, pp. 258 *ff*) notes that Freud's approach owes much to the interpretation of dreams suggested in the Talmud (Jewish texts concerning civil and canonical law), and more particularly the symbolic interpretation typical of the mystical tradition called the Kabbala. Even if Bakan's claims were disputable, the interpretive nature of psychoanalysis and its parallel with hermeneutics as originating from the exegetic tradition should be quite clear. From the mid-1960s onward, there has been a growing recognition of hermeneutic implications of psychoanalysis, which is illustrated by the writings of Herbert Spiegelberg (1965, Vol. 1, pp. 324–25) and Paul Ricoeur (1970), among others.

More recently, Carl Lesche (1985) has tried to show that psychoanalysis is neither a natural science nor simply a therapeutic technique, as it is made to appear; rather, it is a form of research in the humanities. More specifically, Lesche considers psychoanalysis to be an attempt at self-understanding and interpretation guided by the principles of dialectical hermeneutics. Its natural setting is the dialogue between the analysand and the analyst, and it begins with the patient's (analysand's) description of his or her situation, usually a puzzling action or vexing experience. The purpose is to emancipate the analysand from his or her agonies, and the analyst helps do this by offering hypotheses or quasi-explanations based on his or her preunderstandings. Despite being couched in natural science terms such as charge, energy, determinism, and so on, the task is not to manipulate the analysand as if he were an object to be controlled, but to elucidate the meaning underlying his dreams or problematic actions. It is as though the analysand and analyst are partners in research in the humanities, rather than counterplayers in a Machiavellian power play.

Once a text is accepted as a proper metaphor for understanding a person, certain other types of psychological research can be viewed as an enterprise in interpretive hermeneutics. Gordon W. Allport's use of letters or other personal documents in psychological research (Allport, 1942, 1965), and Erik Erikson's psychohistorical interpretations of a biography of Martin Luther (Erikson, 1958/1962) or the autobiography of Mahatama Gandhi (Erikson, 1969), may also be construed as exercises in hermeneutics. More recently, the relevance of hermeneutics for psychology has begun to be recognized in the United Kingdom (Gauld & Shotter, 1977), the United States (Packer, 1985; Gergen, Fisher, & Hepburn, 1986; Messer, Sass, & Woolfolk, 1988), and Europe (Terwee, 1990). With the end of the millennium approaching, there is a steady growth of literature based on hermeneutics in psychology; it is not necessary to provide its bibliography here.

The application of hermeneutic principles to the psychological study of human beings marks a fundamental change in the direction of psychology's growth away from its long-standing commitment to the perspective and methods of natural science. The rise of hermeneutics does not imply the end or repudiation of the natural science approach to their study; for, after all, human beings are organisms and their bodies function like machines, and to that extent insights of biology and

physics do apply. Human brains also function similarly to computers, and to that extent the relevance of artificial intelligence and cognitive science for psychology may not be ruled out. However, human beings are *also* social creatures, products and creators of culture, and meaning makers functioning within what Shotter (1993) calls *conversational realities*. In this context, Shotter's view of humans as rhetoricians and the metaphor of the self as an unfinished text (Gergen, 1988; Altar, 1990) make a good deal of sense. To the extent that human beings function like machines, it would be possible and even necessary to speak in the univocal language of physics. However, insofar as humans construct their lives through the use of language within the context of eternally revisable social customs, we must deal with changing worlds, multiple "realities," plurality of theories, and countless alternative interpretations.

Some of the implications of the hermeneutic approach to self-understanding will be discussed later in this volume in a separate chapter on the self-as-knower. It may simply be noted at this point that the hermeneutic approach is most compatible with the Vedāntic approach. First, the system of Vedānta, like hermeneutics, originated from scriptural exegesis. Indeed, another name for the system of Vedānta is *Uttara Mīmāṁsā*, which literally means a theory that interprets the later (*uttara*) Vedic texts, i.e., the Upaniṣads. Second, as we shall see in our discussion of the self-as-knower, the Vedāntic approach to self-knowledge depends heavily (although not entirely) on the interpretive understanding of the true nature of the self with the help of the Upaniṣads and other Vedāntic texts.

Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructionism

In recent years, several disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences have witnessed many somewhat separate but related trends of thought, which can be considered varieties of "constructionism." Prominent in this regard is the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) in sociology, Goodman (1978) and Arbib and Hesse (1986) in philosophy, and Gergen (1985), Harré (1986, 1987), and many others in psychology. A central feature of constructionism is its direct opposition to reductionism, as the very connotation of "construction" indicates. The roots of these trends of thought can be traced to earlier work of many scholars in several disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, as well as physics. In psychology, for instance, Piaget (1954) pioneered a constructivist view of cognition, as indicated by the title of one of his well-known books, the *The Construction of Reality in the Child*. Piaget's cognitive constructivism stands in sharp contrast to the highly reductionist view of cognition common in today's "cognitive science" approach (Stich, 1983). As I shall try to show later in this chapter, the work of George Kelly (1955) in personality theory and psychotherapy was based largely on cognitive constructivist terms. The Piagetian and Kellyian approaches suggest that human beings cognitively construct and continually reconstruct an image of the world and of their position in it. Although this idea is implicit in the highly influential work of the sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1966), they emphasize social context more than intraindividual factors, while Piaget and Kelly emphasize developmental and intraindividual factors more than social. In recognition of this difference, the individualist and heavily cognitivist approach shared by Piaget and Kelly has come to be known as "cognitive constructivism," as distinguished from the "social constructionism" of Berger and Luckmann, Gergen, Harré, and others.

Both the cognitive constructivist and social constructionist perspectives have profound implications for our understanding of the self. As we shall note in Chapter 4, the self-as-knower can be conceived of as that which constructs images of itself and of the surrounding world. As well, the so-called "social self"—or the social roles with which we identify ourselves—may be thought of as a product of societal influences or a matter of the "social construction of reality." Various implications of such constructivist and constructionist views of the self will be discussed at length in Chapter 4. In addition to such implications for selfhood, constructionism raises certain ontological and epistemological issues that need to be discussed here, since they are relevant to several other issues to be discussed in the remainder of this volume.

The Cognitive Construction of Reality and of Knowledge

As noted, according to the constructionist perspective, human beings cognitively construct and continually reconstruct a view of the world around them and of their place within it. In this respect, the child and the adult, the "ordinary person" as well as the philosopher and the scientist, are all alike, albeit at different levels of sophistication in the task of construction. Piaget's (1954) pioneering studies show how infants begin relating to the world around them by means of their naturally endowed sensory and motor capacities such as looking, listening, grasping, and sucking, and gradually develop increasingly complex cognitive capacities. On the basis of simple but astute observations of children's behavior, Piaget shows how an infant looking for a missing toy must have preverbally developed the notion of object permanence and how babies who enjoy repeatedly toppling a stack of blocks implicitly conceive of the relationship between cause (moving hand) and effect (collapsing of the stack). Seen this way, the child is a budding philosopher concerned with the principle of causality and a scientist engaged in "experimentally" verifying the lawful relationships among replicable natural phenomena. Like Piaget, George Kelly (1955) assumes that such cognitive construction of reality is common to "ordinary" persons as well as scientists. Such construction serves the purpose of understanding, predicting, and controlling various kinds of phenomena that persons of varied educational background or age need to deal with in their respective worlds. But unlike Piaget's developmental focus, Kelly tries primarily to develop techniques, such as the Role Repertory

Test, for understanding ordinary persons' ways of predicting the behavior of significant others and of relevant events in life. Kelly uses these techniques to help patients recognize the instances where their predictions are not confirmed by facts and to revise their views appropriately for better understanding and control of events just as scientists do.

The similarity between the ordinary persons and scientists suggested by cognitive constructionists like Piaget and Kelly is not a psychologist's fancy trying to claim parity between psychology and physics. Indeed, there are physicists who insist that doing physics involves intellectually, i.e., cognitively, constructing a model of the physical world. The most well-known name among such physicists is Albert Einstein. In his letter to Herbert Samuel, Einstein (1951) expressed his constructionist views in the following words:

> In fact, however, the "real" is in no way immediately given to us. Given to us is merely the data of our consciousness ... There is only one way from the data of consciousness to "reality," to wit, the way of conscious or unconscious intellectual construction, which proceeds completely free and arbitrarily. (p. 137)
>
> We are free to choose which elements we wish to apply in the construction of physical reality. (p. 141)
>
> Since the days of Faraday and Maxwell the conviction has established itself that "mass" has to be replaced by "field" as a basic element or brick for constructing "reality." ... I think it is not justified to regard mass as something "real," the field, however, as merely a "fancy." (p. 145)

Einstein's juxtaposition of the word "fancy" against "real," and his use of the expression "constructing 'reality' " are especially noteworthy here. They make it clear that here Einstein is dealing with issues concerning reality and ways of knowing it, i.e., ontological and epistemological issues that are, as per convention, special topics for philosophers rather than physicists. The philosopher Nelson Goodman (1978) also deals with the same issues from a constructionist viewpoint, and interestingly he too speaks of celestial physical motion, which was Einstein's special field of study. Goodman points out, for instance, that the "geocentric and heliocentric systems are different versions of 'the same facts' " (p. 93) constructed from different vantage points. Both Einstein and Goodman consider "facts" in the "real" world as primarily a matter of "intellectual construction," and both recognize that how we construct them depends on the context from which we see the world.

The historical roots of a constructionist view of motion may be traced to the work of the physicist–philosopher Ernst Mach, who was arguably the first thinker to clearly recognize that the understanding of physical motion depends to a great extent on the vantage point of the observer. A standard example is that, although it is the boat floating in the water underneath that seems to move while seeing from the top of the bridge, it is the bridge that seems to move while sitting in the boat. Both versions or motion are correct, depending on which vantage point one

chooses to speak from. The apparently different constructions from different contexts or vantage points need not necessarily be at odds with each other; both (or several) versions might be translatable into one another and equally correct within their respective frameworks. It is this *relativistic* view of physical motion in Mach's work that provided the crucial insights for Einstein's theory of relativity. What is relevant for us in the present context is not the problems in studying motion, space, or time, but some of the epistemological implications of Mach's work. Here are some of Mach's words that are relevant in this context:

> Different ideas can express the facts with the *same* exactness in the domain accessible to observation. The *facts* must hence be carefully distinguished from the *intellectual* constructs the formation of which they suggested. The latter—concepts—must be *consistent* with observation, and must in addition be *logically* in accord with one another. Now these two requirements can be fulfilled in *more* than *one* manner, and hence the different systems of geometry. (Mach, 1901–1903/1960, pp. 132–133, emphasis original)

Mach clarifies that although we can construct many different versions of what a given set of observations means, not all of them would be correct. To be worthy of being called knowledge, a construction or "theory" must fulfill standard criteria such as internal consistency and correspondence with data. The corpuscular and wave theories of light are good examples that illustrate how the same set of observations can be accounted equally well by two different theories. Physicists are free to use either the concept of *corpuscle* (particle) or that of *wave* as a basic element or "brick" for constructing reality, as Einstein would put it. The basic Machian thesis here is that it is possible to cognitively construct several equally viable theories of the same set of phenomena. The psychologist George Kelly (1955) has christened this thesis the "principle of *constructive alternativism*" (p. 15). It states that "there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world" (Kelly, 1955, p. 15). This principle clearly militates against absolutist or univocalist views of knowledge.

In more recent times, Thomas Kuhn seemed to promote univocalism to the extent that he placed physics above psychology, insofar as the former has developed a single, common "paradigm"—perhaps with the exception of corpuscular and wave theories—while the latter has a plethora of too many competing theories. Nevertheless, Kuhn recognizes that in most fields of science it is common for alternative theories to arise and to claim superiority over their rivals. Such competing theories stake a claim on the same territory marked by the same observations or experimental data. In such cases, according to Kuhn's oft-quoted words: "Debates over theory-choice cannot be cast in a form that fully resembles logical or mathematical proof.... There is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice, no systematic decision procedure which, properly applied, must lead each individual in the group to the same decision" (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 199–200). Kuhn's critics have construed his remarks about the lack of a "neutral algorithm for theory choice" to be suggestive of relativism. This charge is commonly leveled not

only against cognitive constructivism, but also against social constructionism. We shall return to the problem of relativism after a brief discussion of social constructionism.

The Social Construction of Reality

The credit for popularizing the idea of the "social construction of reality" goes to Berger and Luckmann's book of the same title. Building on the Mannheimian principles of the sociology of knowledge (Mannheim, 1929/1936) and on the work of the sociologist–philosopher Alfred Schutz (1967), the psychologist Piaget (1954), and many others, Berger and Luckmann (1966) developed the thesis that the sphere in which people live their daily lives is a socially constructed reality. According to the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schutz (1945/1968, 1970), each human being lives in his or her "world," meaning the totality of a specific sphere of experience as seen and understood by him or her at a particular time and under specific circumstances. Used in this sense, the words *world* and *reality* mean much more than the earth moving in the solar system in which humans live as organisms in specific geographic locales and ecological surroundings. The "world" in the Shutzian sense may be individually perceived and subjectively defined as in the case of the world fabricated by a person in his or her daydreams. This is the subjective reality to which the individual reacts. Each individual also lives in a collectively shared and consensually defined world, like the world shared by lovers, by followers of a religious cult, or by a community of scientists. In a contemporary urban society there are many relatively different worlds existing side by side: worlds of politics, academics, chess players, amateur photographers, as well as a world of commerce, another of seafarers, and so on. Any given individual may live simultaneously, successively, alternatively, or occasionally in an undetermined number of such worlds. Many of these worlds are "man-made" and purely optional, such that one could drop in or drop out of them at will, for instance, as in the case of the world of philatelists that I sometimes participate in. Regardless of their negotiable, revisable, and even "artificial" nature, such cognitively and socially constructed worlds are "real" to the persons who participate in them. The existence of such worlds is rarely doubted by their residents, and their rules govern the members' plans, conduct, and emotions in daily life.

In addition to such *social* worlds that we create, we also create wider *symbolic* worlds. The domain of myths, angels, gods, heaven, and hell is an example of a symbolic world that a religious community shares. In *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter L. Berger (1966b) describes his theory of the symbolic worlds. The symbolic world of the Tibetan Buddhists may be entirely different from that of the Mennonites in the American prairies, or from that of the Sunni Muslims in Afghanistan. But for each community, its own symbolic world is as "real" as the fields in which they grow food and the markets in which they shop. Scientists, too, live in symbolic worlds

defined by the Kuhnian paradigms of their speciality. However, the shared worldview of science is secular and value free; and *qua* scientists or academics of various stripes, we are generally expected to keep our values and spiritual needs out of the business of research and teaching. Given the unwritten doctrine of the separation of the science on the one hand and religion and spirituality on the other, an undetermined number of academics fulfill their religious and spiritual needs either at home alone or in their respective churches. By and large, the symbolic world of the academe is kept insulated from the symbolic worlds of the various religions and sects. But sometimes these symbolic worlds clash, as is illustrated in occasional debates on creationism versus evolutionism on North American campuses.

In the present work we will have to deal with several themes in the symbolic worlds of various sects of Hinduism and Buddhism, since it is within their contexts that some of the most significant indigenous psychological concepts and methods developed in India. Certain features of these symbolic worlds could conceivably interfere with the understanding of indigenous Indian concepts to the extent that they are inconsistent with or opposed to relevant aspects of the worldview of natural science in general and that of other religions in particular. At any rate, there is a definite connection between the self-understanding of a person and the socially constructed worlds—secular and religious, mundane and spiritual—in which he or she participates. In his essay, "Identity as a Problem in the Sociology of Knowledge," Peter Berger (1966a) suggests that the identity of a person may be defined as the "location" of a person in a given "world," and that one's selfhood may be construed in terms of a set of statuses and positions one occupies in the multiple worlds in which one participates. We shall discuss the implications of the social construction of reality for self and social identity in Chapter 4.

Constructivism, Realism, and Idealism

Constructivism and constructive alternativism are often thought of as necessarily implying either idealism or relativism or both. Both of these issues deserve to be considered here; let us take idealism first. The terms *real* and *ideal* have different meanings in various ontological doctrines, and the corresponding "isms" have continued to generate strong passions for and against each. We need only consider those aspects of this issue that pertain to cognitive constructivism and social constructionism. In this context, realism implies the belief in a mind-independent world, and idealism its opposite. Against this background, the notion of a "constructed" reality often conveys the constructivists' and constructionists' disbelief in a mind-independent world. Although this might be true of some constructionists, many of the prominent constructionists of our times explicitly express their belief in a mind-independent world. For instance, Michael Arbib and Mary Hesse (1986), who have emerged as prominent advocates of constructionism in contemporary philosophy of science, declare that "we do not take it to

imply a radically nonrealist view of science" (p. 7). Jean Piaget and George Kelly, two of the most prominent constructionists in psychology, are both realists. Kelly (1955, Vol. 1) clearly states that "[w]e presume that the universe is really existing and that man [*sic*] is gradually coming to understand it" (p. 6). Kelly is opposed to the "traditional realism," which insists that a man is "always the victim of circumstances." According to Kelly, not only is the universe real, it may also be possible to describe it accurately and as a whole by means of a single unified scheme of science. However, no such single grand scheme has yet been invented. One could say that contemporary science has implicitly adopted the strategy of dividing the universe into an increasing number of "parts" or aspects and continues generating ostensibly improved models of their chosen subject matter. Such model building may or may not eventually lead to a single body of unified science, as Carnap had hoped.

Be that as it may, to me it seems fair to say that people continue to cognitively construct models of the world, and that one is always free to construe the same object in more than one way. The processes of construction continue both within the "heads" of individuals and in conversations among individuals, and it does not matter whether the constructors believe in realism or idealism. Indeed, it does not matter whether they are even aware of the distinction between realism and idealism. It should not be surprising therefore if we find constructivists of a single school of thought divided into two branches, such that while one branch adopts a purely idealist position, the other does not. Such a situation is indeed obtained in the case of two branches of the Advaita Vedānta school, which, as I shall point out in Chapter 4, follows a constructivist epistemology. According to one of the branches of this school, which follows the *Dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi* viewpoint of Prakāśātman (ca. 1200 CE), the world is considered to be a simple illusion; things are believed to exist only when they are perceived but dissolve when they are not. All the other branches of the Advaita Vedānta school, however, reject such a purely idealist view and accept the mind-independent existence of objects within the practical reality of daily living (see Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, pp. 478–479). In fact, most Advaita Vedāntists other than those of the *Dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi* branch are keen to repudiate the idealist doctrines of the Vijñānavāda Buddhism.

To my knowledge, none of the contemporary cognitive constructivists, such as the Piagetians and Kellyians, adopt an idealist position, but I have met at least one social constructionist who strongly rejected Piagetian and Kellyian cognitivism, since he thought its emphasis on intraindividual cognitive processes was bound to lapse into solipsism. The social constructionists, he suggested, avoid such a danger by insisting that the cognitive processes originate from interpersonal communication, and thereby keep away from the solitary abyss of an individualist viewpoint. Although the social constructionist might thus avoid the charge of idealism, many of them from Mannheim through Berger and Luckmann to Gergen have often faced the charge of relativism, which deserves to be examined.

Absolutism, Relativism, and Pluralism

Absolutist views of knowledge were nurtured in the Western world in its so-called "modern era" by a loose alliance of several epistemic principles: the empiricist view of knowledge as a copy of the real world, the rationalist views of the universal principles of the understanding, the logical positivist assumption of the viability of an ideal language of symbolic logic, and the foundationist conceptions of knowledge. All these principles have recently come under serious attack. Interestingly, the most serious attacks on foundationism have arisen from insiders of its very bastion: from within the camp of analytical philosophers such as Quine and Sellars, whom Rorty (1979) has called the "heretical followers of [Bertrand] Russell" (p. 167). There are of course others outside of the analytical camp who have also undermined the absolutist epistemology of logical positivism. The psychologist Jean Piaget, for instance, has repeatedly argued that Kurt Gödel has conclusively shown that any formalized axiomatic system must always remain incomplete, and that absolutist epistemologies based on a putatively ideal logico-mathematical language are doomed to failure. Says Piaget (1968/1970c): "[T]he pyramid of knowledge no longer rests on foundations but hangs by its vertex, an ideal point never reached, and, more curious, constantly rising" (p. 34). I shall have more to say about Piaget when I discuss the self-as-knower (Chapter 4).

In the current, "postpositivist" era of psychology, constructionism and hermeneutics are emerging as two major contenders for metatheory for psychology. With this, the pendulum is swinging away from absolutism to unrestrained relativism. In *Against Method*, Paul Feyerabend (1976) has advocated nothing short of an epistemic anarchy. It is my impression that critics of foundationism such as Rorty (1979), as well as some protagonists of constructionism such as Gergen (1982), tend to suggest no limits to relativism, and often invoke among their listeners a strong emotional response as if they are being rudely awakened from a positivist slumber and are suddenly thrown into a Feyerabendian anarchy. But there seems to be no reason to put the absolutism–relativism issue in an either/or fashion, and as I have suggested elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1993), there seems to be no need to be overly concerned about the dangers of limitless relativism.

As far as psychology is considered, two of the prominent constructivists, Piaget and Kelly, oppose absolutism without advocating an unrestrained relativism, and their positions are worth considering briefly here. Piaget (1968/1970c) views knowledge as continually progressing from "weaker" to "stronger" cognitive structures. His model of cognitive development points out several specific criteria of the more advanced cognitive structures—higher levels of differentiation, integration, equilibration, and so on—although to my knowledge he has not equally well clarified what characterizes progress to "stronger" systems of knowledge as such. As noted, Kelly's principle of *constructive alternativism* suggests that there are always alternative constructions of anything we may wish to study,

but he also insists that "some of them are undoubtedly better than others. They are better from our human point of view because they support more precise and more accurate predictions about more events" (Kelly, 1955, pp. 14–15). He specifically refers to the "importance of coherence, relevance, comprehensiveness, parsimony, verifiability, rigor, and predictive efficiency in theory construction" (Kelly, 1969, p. 294).

I have come across echoes of these Kellyian thoughts in the philosophy of science literature. After being criticized for presenting a relativist view of science in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn came up with a similar list of criteria to help evaluate competing theories. In *The Essential Tension*, Kuhn (1977) says: "These five characteristics—accuracy, consistency, scope, simplicity, and fruitfulness—are all standard criteria for evaluating the adequacy of a theory" (p. 322). These are old-fashioned criteria, but the only difference is that Kuhn, like Kelly and Piaget, considers theories in any field to be open to construction, rejects absolutism typical of logical positivism, and as noted, insists that "there is no neutral algorithm for theory-choice" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 200). I take the list of acceptable criteria for theory choice to mean first, that there is limit to relativism—not just anything will go since there are limited number of criteria for choice—and second, that their application requires discretion.

Absolutism versus relativism is one of the actively debated issues in contemporary philosophy of science (e.g., Barnes & Bloor, 1982; Hollis & Lukes, 1982; Geertz, 1984; Bernstein, 1988; Krausz, 1989; Rorty, 1991). It is not necessary to examine the issue here in great detail. Within the field of studies of person, self, and identity to be discussed in this volume, there exists a wide array of different perspectives, and it is necessary for me to indicate how I would deal with this diversity. As indicated earlier, I think that absolutist and univocal positions are neither desirable nor viable, for their adoption opens the gates for ignoring or even trying to suppress alternatives. Although the number of alternative perspectives is large, they are not so large that the situation becomes chaotic. Plus, as indicated, one must use discretion as appropriate to the issues being studied and the goals of the study.

One of the basic points I wish to make in the following chapter is that persons are not things that can be studied as objects completely governed by universal and eternal laws statable in absolutist and univocalist terms. The goal of "prediction and control," highly valued during the heyday of behaviorism, implied the objectification of persons by psychologists who assigned themselves the right to control others. This goal as well as the methods appropriate within its contexts are in many ways inappropriate for the study of persons, selves, and their identity. If human beings are understood to be meaning makers capable of pursuing distinct, self-defined goals, then we need approaches that are appropriate to this understanding of humans. Habermas's (1968/1971) emphasis on knowledge as serving multiple human interests, including "emancipation," makes sense in this context.

Such a perspective has been very much a minority perspective in Western psychology so far. An important point in taking a cross-cultural look is to recognize the radically different conceptions of knowledge across cultures. I hope to be able to show that traditional Indian systems such as Yoga and Vedānta approach issues pertaining to personhood, selfhood, and identity in ways significantly different from those common in the West. They also conceive of self-transformation in light of goals and values not stressed in the West. The diversity of goals such as self-actualization, positive mental health, self-realization, and the like demand and justify many alternative ways to seek and apply psychological knowledge. Moreover, in light of the principle of constructive alternativism discussed earlier, it is possible to construe the same object in more than one way, many or all of which may equally satisfy common criteria such as validity, accuracy, coherence, efficacy, and the like. Finally, pluralism has been the spirit of the Indian perspective for ages. The ancient Vedas suggest: Truth is one, but wise persons describe it differently [*ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti* (*Ṛg Veda*, 1, 164, 46)].

Notes

1. There are numerous texts–just over 100–that often have been included under the category "Upaniṣad." About a dozen or so of these have been considered "principal," owing to their penetrating analysis of important issues. These more important Upaniṣads are among the oldest. They are believed to have been composed around 1500–600 BC. For an English translation of the principal Upaniṣads, see R. E. Hume (1931). For the present purpose I have relied on the Sanskrit text edited by V. P. Limaye and R. D. Vadekar (1958).
2. I have borrowed this metaphor from Gregory Bateson (1979, pp. 69–70). I am grateful to Ross Powell for bringing it to my attention.
3. In a footnote to her article, Abu-Lughod (1991, p. 161) ascribes the origin of the term "halfie" to a personal communication from the anthropologist Kirin Narayan, who has explained her views on this matter in a later publication (Narayan, 1993).
4. This view of perpetual *progress* stands in sharp contrast with the age-old Indian view of history, where civilization moves from its original pristine state or the Age of Truth (*satya yuga*) to successive stages of *deterioration* before being restored to a golden age. Also, in sharp contrast to the *linear* view of time common in the West, a *cyclical* view of time has prevailed in India, such that creation was believed to be followed by phases of evolution and dissolution, only to start a the process or creation again and to continue in cycles. For an account of the traditional Indian view of time, see M. Deshpande (1979).
5. For a discussion of the implications for psychology of the history of conflict between science and the Church since the 17th century, see Paranjpe (1984, pp. 17–32).
6. See Plato's *Republic* (1941), Chapter XIII.
7. The connection between Plotinus's ideas and Indian thought has been the topic of a conference. For papers submitted at this conference, see Harris (1982).
8. The idea of progress appears now to have spread well beyond Europe and is often reflected in the way in which ordinary people expect a pay raise and better and more of everything in life, year after year. It is being increasingly realized in recent years, however, that given the vast exploitation and rapid depletion of natural resources, expectations about perpetual progress are not only unsustain-

able, but are also most probably leading humankind to an irreversible ecological ruin. But during the 19th century, when Europeans had discovered vast and relatively empty continents open to colonizing, perpetual progress could not have been perceived as unaffordable.

9. The Hindu triad of gods involves Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa, respectively, symbolizing the forces of creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe. Their consorts are, respectively, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, and Pārvatī.
10. In *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, T. R. V. Murti (1960, p. 117, footnote) names Bhaskara among non-Advaita Vedāntins who accused Śaṅkara as being a Buddhist in disguise.
11. The words quoted here are an English paraphrase by Halbfass (1981/1988, p. 189) of the following original words in Sanskrit: "*kaiścid eva mlecchādibhir manuṣyāpasadaiḥ paśuprāyaiḥ.*" Halbfass's source is page 86 of an edition of *Sāṅkhya-tattva-kaumudī*, i.e., Vācaspatimiśra's commentary on *Sāṅkhya Kārikā*, 5, edited by S. A. Srinivasan and published in Hamburg in 1967. The Monier-Williams dictionary translates the term *apasad* as the offspring of marriages of upper-caste men with lower-caste women, and as outcaste. The Webster's dictionary defines "scum" as refuse, or lowest class. There is no reason to quibble over the translation; the contempt for foreigners expressed by a noted scholar like Vācaspatimiśra is obvious.
12. Professor Bhattacharyya's (1954) lecture was delivered in October 1931, at Chandernagore. Its text was recovered from his unpublished writings and published in the *Visvabharati Quarterly*.
13. In his article on logical positivism in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, John Passmore (1967) said: "Logical positivism, then, is dead, or as dead as a philosophical movement ever becomes" (p. 56).
14. In *Knowledge and Error*, Mach (1905/1976, p. 17) says: "Sensations, being both physical and mental, form the basis of all mental experience." In *Space and Geometry* (1901–1903/1960, p. 39) he says: "In the higher stages, attention is directed, not to space-sensations alone, but to those intricate and intimate *complexes* of other sensations with space-sensations which we call *bodies*" (emphasis original).
15. See Popper (1945/1967, Vol. 2, pp. 212–223).
16. For a discussion of the issue of relativism, see Barnes and Bloor (1982), Hollis and Lukes (1982), Geertz (1984), Bernstein (1988), Krausz (1989), and Rorty (1991).
17. For a detailed discussion of the origins and implications of Locke's notion of the mind as a *tabula rasa*, see Petryszak (1981).
18. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant (A:51; B:75; 1781/1966, p. 45) said: "Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind."
19. I have borrowed this interpretation of Fregean logic—that the rules for connecting symbols suggested in his form of logic or "pure" language would reflect the structure of the universe it was designed to represent—from W. T. Jones's *History of Western Philosophy* (1969, 2nd ed., Vol. 5, p. 154).
20. *Abādhita viṣayākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛttirhi pramā ityucyate*." Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (n.d./1928) in *Siddhāntabindu* (p. 21).
21. For a useful discussion of these issues with particular reference to psychology, see Laurence D. Smith (1986, pp. 43–46).
22. In the case of self-understanding, it is only claims pertaining to the "social self" that may have to be justified to a community, not of scientists, but of "significant others" appropriate for the self in a given social situation. However, certain other aspects of the selfhood, such as pain, fear of death, or "existential despair," may belong to the inner solitude inaccessible to anyone else. Kurt Baier (1962) speaks forcefully in support of this principle, asserting that the final epistemic authority concerning private events rests with person whose private experience they belong to.
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2

Person, Self, and Identity

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the concepts of person, self, and identity. These concepts have a long history and are often used with diverse and sometimes even contradictory meanings. Nevertheless, they are at the core of our conceptions of what it means to be a human being, and their varied conceptions reflect some of our highest ideals and aspirations. Throughout the history of both Western and Indian thought, the concept of self has had its strong advocates as well as staunch critics. The main points in the dialectical positions for and against the self will be examined later in this chapter. Before turning to this discussion, it is necessary to consider the concepts of person and personality, which provide the natural context and home for the varied conceptions of selfhood.

Person and Personality

Over a century has passed since Trendelenberg (1870/1910) wrote an authoritative account of the historical roots of the concepts of person and personality. In revisiting that history half a century ago, Marcel Mauss (1938/1985), a well-known anthropologist, noted that the concept of person (*personne* in French) "slowly developed over many centuries and through numerous vicissitudes" (p. 1). Mauss also pointed out how similar or equivalent concepts are found in many cultures around the world, among both "primitive" and "advanced" cultures, in the East as well as the West. The concept of person and its cognate, the self, have been shown to be variously influenced by medieval Christian thought (Morris, 1972/1987), by the European Enlightenment (Baumeister, 1986; Trendelenberg, 1870/1910), and by the rise of commerce and capitalism in modern Europe (Broughton, 1986). Recently, while commenting on Mauss's seminal essay, Carrithers (1985) has offered an alternate social history of the concept of self with a focus on its development in Buddhist thought in India. In the following pages, I shall first discuss the development of the concepts of person and self in Western thought in

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light of the above-mentioned accounts before turning to parallel trends in Indian thought.

Although the terms *person* and *personality* are commonly used as synonyms, they have nevertheless acquired different meanings. While *person* connotes a human being with rights and duties, *personality* suggests distinct individuality. According to Trendelenberg (1870/1910), both meanings can be etymologically traced to the Latin root *persona* and to Green roots *prosopeion*, meaning mask, or *prosopon*, meaning face. The idea of personality as distinct individuality probably derives from the Roman adaptation of the Greek tradition of using masks in drama. It conveys the *outer appearance* of an individual, suggested by masks that hide the wearer's face. The reliance in contemporary psychology on externally observable behaviors for the sake of the measurement of personality makes sense against this background. The concept of personality also conveys a unity of character that lies "beneath the mask" (Monte, 1995), or common characteristics of one and the same individual playing different roles in different situations. This implies that personality refers to persistent features, or *traits*, of an individual that manifest across time and space.

It is necessary to sharply distinguish between *person* as an individual with rights and duties and *personality* as individuality, since the latter carries few, if any, of the ethicolegal implications of the former. It is my impression that, in the mainstream of contemporary psychology, there is an overemphasis on personality to the relative neglect of the ethicolegal significance of personhood. In the remainder of this section, I shall try to sketch the development of the concept of personhood in Western thought and identify parallel trends in Indian thought.

The Concept of Person in the Intellectual Social History of the West

The idea that human beings are not merely things or physical objects but something more is quite ancient. In ancient Greece, human beings were thought of as being capable of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, as well as virtue and vice. Aristotle elaborates this idea in *Nicomachean Ethics*. One of the central points in this work is that an individual could be praised and blamed for only voluntary actions, not for involuntary movements. Aristotle distinguished between an individual being moved by his or her own initiative, i.e., by will or "final cause," as opposed to being moved by an external force or "efficient cause," such as a charging animal or a moving vehicle. In other words, human beings are, above all, moral agents open to praise or blame or other rewards and punishments for what they choose to do. The Stoics are said to have followed this line of thought; they believed that only motives have moral significance, and considered performing one's duty a matter of great importance (Jones, 1969, 1975, Vol. 1, p. 331). According to Mauss (1938/1985, p. 18), the voluntarist views and personal ethics of the Stoics informed the Roman conceptions of the individual and the law. Trendelenberg quotes Gaius (110–180 CE), a famous authority on Roman Law, who uses the term *persona* to designate the rights of all human beings without distinction, as opposed to things or objects that have no such rights. In ancient Rome, equal rights were granted only to free *men*, not to slaves or women. For millennia in the West, as in India, usually the term *man* designated persons, thus implicitly denying personhood to women. This gender bias in the usage of the term is paralleled in India by the use of the Sanskrit term *puruṣa*, literally meaning *man*, to designate personhood. The matter of usage is not nominal; it has long reflected the differential privileges of men and women. For instance, as we shall see later in this section, in Canada, women were not considered persons by law, and hence were deemed ineligible to hold high public offices; this changed in 1929.

Focus on the concept of person has often implied individualist as opposed to collectivist focus and value. In *An Intellectual History of Psychology*, Daniel Robinson (1976, pp. 104–106) has shown how an important shift occurred from group liability implied in Greek customs to *individual* responsibility articulated in Roman laws. According to Greek conceptions of justice, it was acceptable for the survivors of a murdered relative to take revenge against the killer's entire family, or even the entire town, thus admitting *collective* responsibility for the actions of individuals. By contrast, Roman law restricted guilt to the specific perpetrator without extending it to his or her relatives, descendants, or others. During the medieval era, when life in Europe was dominated by the social institutions of the Church, the basic principles of Christianity retained the focus of moral responsibility on the individual, continuing the influential tradition of Roman law. As noted by Colin Morris (1972/1987), "[a] sense of individual identity and value is implicit in belief in a God who has called each man by name, who has sought him out as a shepherd seeks his lost sheep" (p. 10). Accordingly, in the 4th century of the Christian Era, St. Augustine articulates the idea of *free will*, whereby on the Day of Judgment, God would hold each individual accountable for all actions he or she has freely chosen over alternatives courses available.

During Christianity's Reformation, individual responsibility became even more important, as Martin Luther challenged the Church's authority to grant indulgences to rich and powerful individuals for their sins. He stressed that each individual must face God on the Great Day without any mediation by the Catholic Church. The sense of individual responsibility encouraged by the Protestant ethic has been articulated as a major factor in the development of capitalism in Europe (Weber, 1904/1930). At any rate, with or without the direct effect of Reformation, in Europe around the turn of the 17th century a rapid rise of commerce and industry guided by the entrepreneurship of an increasingly powerful mercantile class began. As noted by John Broughton (1986, p. 147), the merchants, producers, and manufacturers in the capitalist system must experience life as self-making; they demand and defend individual rights in politics as they stand up in the

marketplace to make a fortune for themselves. Personhood as defined by individual rights and responsibilities and backed by a clear sense of individual identity was central to the social transformation of modern Europe.

The Articulation of Personhood during Europe's Age of Enlightenment

The Englishman John Locke was one of the most influential thinkers of the European Enlightenment. His contributions are particularly important in shaping the modern conceptions of personhood. According to Locke,

> *Person* ... is the name for this self.... It is a forensic term appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of law, and happiness, and misery. This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness,—whereby it becomes concerned and *accountable*; owns and imputes to itself past actions ... desiring that the self that is conscious should be happy. (1690/1959, pp. 466–467, emphasis original)

The first thing to note here is that, according to Locke, person is a forensic term: it applies to justice and the courts of law, and thus implies moral responsibilities and legal rights of an individual. Second, Locke specifies the psychological conditions that must be present for a person to be held responsible:

1. That a person is "intelligent," i.e., *knows* the rules of conduct applicable in the given situation.
2. That he or she *feels* happiness and misery that might result from a particular course of action, right or wrong.
3. That he or she *acts* (i.e., is an agent) so as to be able to attain an intended result of his or her action.

Elsewhere in the same section of his book, Locke clarifies that, to be held responsible, it is necessary to ensure that the person accused of wrongdoing is the same as the one who was witnessed while actually committing the alleged crime. In other words, the ethicolegal conception of personhood is inextricably connected with the notion of personal identity. Says Locke: "In this personal identity is founded all the right and justice of reward and punishment; happiness and misery being that for which every one is concerned for himself" (1690/1959, p. 459).

Locke's ideas became an integral part of the thinking of such major scholars of the European Enlightenment as Butler, Reid, Hume, and Kant. All of these men clarified and elaborated the basic ideas of the Lockean view of personhood. As we shall see later, Hume and Kant proposed radically different views on how to account for personal identity, and their lines of thinking generated an active debate that continues till this date. For Immanuel Kant, arguably the most important figure of the Enlightenment, person is a key concept, a thing of highest value. In "Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals," Kant (1785/1909) said:

"Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature's, have ... only a relative value as means, and are therefore called *things*, rational beings, on the contrary, are called *persons*, because their very nature points them out as ends in themselves" (p. 46, emphasis original). In *Critique of Judgment*, Kant (1790/1987) said: "We can reduce all the powers of the mind, without exception, to these three: the *cognitive power*, the *feeling of pleasure and displeasure*, and the *power of desire*" (p. 394, emphasis original). Following this, he explains in detail how moral as well as esthetic judgments are possible only through the joint working of these powers. It should be clear from this that Kant affirms the Lockean idea that cognition, affect, and conation constitute the basic psychological conditions of personhood.

The influence of Locke's ideas of personhood was not restricted either to philosophy or to Europe; they shaped political, legal, and social life well beyond the European continent. In *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, Bernard Bailyn (1967) notes that in "pamphlet after pamphlet American writers cited Locke on natural rights" (p. 27). In *A History of Western Philosophy*, W. T. Jones (1969) says: "The spirit of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights was thoroughly Lockian; indeed, the American political ideal today is still the Lockian state" (Vol. 3, p. 279). Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes (1985, p. viii) have observed (and rightly so, in my opinion) that the ethicolegal conception of personhood has become the cornerstone of modern political, social, and legal institutions in Western societies. Indeed, the idea of persons as individuals with human rights is central to liberal democracies around the world today. The declaration of human rights by the United Nations is a reflection of the worldwide influence of an ethicolegal conception of personhood. Many of us today strive to enshrine individual rights in constitutions, seek to clarify each individual's responsibilities in local, national, and international institutions, and try to protect human rights in every corner of the world, wherever they might be in danger.

The Variable Boundaries of Personhood

Although the term *person* normally applies only to human beings, its legal definition includes corporations that are endowed with rights and duties like those of individual citizens. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that such usage of the term was in vogue in the English language as early as in the mid-15th century, i.e., a long time before Locke. Over the centuries, with the rise of worldwide trade and commerce, such a broad conception of personhood has become widespread and well entrenched, regulating and ensuring the rights of individuals, corporations, and governments at all levels. Corporations, like persons, are given rights to own property and to conduct industrial and commercial activities and are also expected to pay taxes and to make amends for injuries or damages resulting from

their activities. The sprawling growth of multinational corporations in today's world is suggestive of the acceptance of the rights of corporations to do business in nearly every country. While on the one hand rights and duties are thus assigned to artificial entities like corporations, they are, on the other hand, denied to innumerable human beings. As noted, in ancient Rome all free men were supposed to have equal rights, but slaves and women were not. Similarly, during the late 18th century when the American Constitution was framed, rights to liberty and equality were extended only to white men. The aboriginal peoples had neither the obligation to pay taxes nor the privilege to vote. Most African Americans, who were then called Negroes, could not own property; as slaves, they were themselves owned and treated like chattel or any other type of property. Indeed, it is interesting to see how the personhood of negroes was viewed during the American constitutional debates, for it points to an important aspect of the way in which rights and duties of human beings are sometimes treated.

In 1787, as American politicians sat down to negotiate the rules of election of representatives for the new House of Congress, the southerners realized that the more populous northern states would send a greater number of representatives, and thus wield more power. To offset that advantage, the southern states tried to use the large number of slaves on their farms to their own advantage. After considerable bargaining, they came up with a compromise. Section 2 of Article I of the original US Constitution read: "Representatives ... shall be apportioned among the several States ... according to their Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons ... excluding Indians not taxed, and three fifths of all other Persons." The records of constitutional debates (Hunt & Scott, 1920) clarify that the number of "free men" meant the "number of white inhabitants" (p. 243).[1] The idea of "three fifths of all other Persons" makes it appear as if personhood was considered to be measurable in exact fractions, and that it was actually granted to nonwhites in some form of fractional voting rights. In fact, no slaves were allowed to vote either fully or partly; it is just that white southern politicians grabbed some additional power in proportion to the number of slaves in their states. The "three fifths" rule was repealed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution in 1868. At any rate, this episode in American history illustrates the ways in which the concept of person has been open to interpretation in various ways. An example from the history of 20th-century Canada will illustrate a different variety of the twists and turns in the continual redefinition of the concept.

In 1927, the Governor General of Canada nominated a woman, Henrietta Muir Edwards, to the country's Senate. Given the historical incapacity of women to hold office under the traditional British common law, this appointment was blocked. In response, Edwards and her suffragette friends contested the decision in the courts in a famous lawsuit that has come to be known as the "Persons Case."[2] The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1928 that women were not persons and were therefore ineligible to hold public office. During the following year, this judgment was reversed by the judicial Committee of the Privy Council (see Edwards v. Attorney General of Canada, in *Western Weekly Reports*, 1929, Vol. 3, pp. 479–495), saying that "the exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours" (p. 481), thereby clearing the way for the appointment of its first woman nominee to the Canadian senate. This is a small but important vignette from the long and arduous history of women's continuing struggle for equal rights. Regardless of the gains made recently by the international feminist movement, women in major parts of the world from Japan through the Islamic countries are still treated as if they were not persons.

The idea of fractionation or quantification of personhood suggested by three-fifths rule would seem odd indeed. Nevertheless, to the extent that personhood is a matter of rights and duties, it *is* a matter of degree rather than all or nothing. Rights and duties are not assigned to a human being suddenly and in full at birth, nor do they disappear completely upon death. Rights and duties accrue gradually with the maturation of the individual to "adulthood," which is defined differently in different places and times. Various markers of adulthood, such as the age of eligibility to vote or get married, or the age at which one is held fully responsible and must face criminal charges in adult court, are arbitrarily set and continually revised. With old age, rights such as right to work, as well as responsibilities such as paying taxes or fees at the full adult rate, diminish in many societies. The time when a growing fetus becomes a person is far less precisely defined than the age of granting of adult status. Is abortion in the third trimester of pregnancy any more serious a crime than taking a "day after" pill to get rid of the zygote that might have been conceived during the previous night? Such dilemmas are at the basis of the hot debate currently raging between the advocates of prochoice versus prolife viewpoints. They illustrate the complexities of the varied processes whereby a speck of protoplasm becomes a "person" with rights, including the most fundamental right to a life of some sort. The rights of persons do not disappear suddenly at death either. Consider, for instance, the passions aroused by bone fragments found at a spot believed to be a community's burial site in ancient times. Anyone, whether or not a biological successor of the ancients, might legitimately demand that the remains of ancient human bodies deserve to be treated with dignity—the kind of dignity that any living human being at any time should deserve.

The Constructed Nature, Variability, and Comparability of Conceptions of Personhood

The point of the discussion in this chapter so far should be clear: An individual's rights and duties expand and contract across cultures, over centuries, and even within the course of a life cycle. The rights and duties associated with personhood are not fixed; they change—grow or shrink—with the community's

changing ethos in the course of history. Thus, personhood, insofar as it is a matter of individuals' rights and duties, is socially constructed and is continually reconstructed. In recent years, some anthropologists and cultural psychologists have started to show how personhood is constructed differently in different cultures (e.g., Miller, 1991). If personhood is socially constructed, then it is reasonable to expect that concepts of personhood should vary from culture to culture as they do from time to time within the same culture. It should be no surprise that some anthropologists have noted the distinctive features of the conception of personhood in the West. Thus, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1975) asserted that

> the Western conception of person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against such wholes and against a social and natural background is, however incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures. (p. 48)

Geertz's observations confirm my observations mentioned earlier that in the intellectual history of the West, personhood is conceived of in an individualist way, and that cognition, emotion, and action are considered to be its central features. But are these features of Western conceptions of personhood so peculiar and unique as to stand out in such sharp contrast against the backdrop of cultures across the world? I am not a cultural anthropologist and I do not have either broad knowledge of world cultures comparable to experienced anthropologists like Geertz or cross-cultural empirical data to assess the universality or relativity of conceptions of personhood like those presented by Shweder and Bourne (1984). However, from my understanding of Indian and Western cultures, it is my impression that the specific features of the Western conception of personhood noted by Geertz are not so unique to the Western world as he makes them appear.

If conceptions of personhood were highly unique, then comparing them would be as unreasonable as comparing "apples and oranges," as the expression goes. Indeed, I would like to show that the traditional Indian conception of personhood shares many of the prominent features of the Western concept of personhood noted by Geertz, namely its individualist character and the central place it gives to cognition, feeling, and action. Certainly there are many ways in which changing Indian and Western conceptions of personhood have been different from one another. Nevertheless, it is my impression that in being strongly individualist and in having a central place for cognition, affect, and conation, there is a sufficient enough degree of comparability in traditional Indian and Western conceptions of personhood to warrant their meaningful comparison. In the following section, I hope to point out that such features stand out in the classical accounts of personhood in the intellectual history of India.

There is no single Indian concept that can be cited as an exact equivalent of either *persona* in Latin, *person* in English, or *personne* in French, but the Sanskrit

term *puruṣa*, literally meaning *man*, can be said to be its closest equivalent. Such approximate matching should hardly be surprising because different languages represent the same world in different ways—like different maps of the same territory using different legends. Even as Geertz has noted certain peculiarities of the Western conception of personhood, other scholars have suggested that East–West differences in conceptions of personhood are basic and substantial. For instance, in his book on the discovery of the individual in medieval Europe, Colin Morris 1972/1987) has suggested that the "Asiatic and Eastern tradition of thought has set much less store by the individual than the West has done" (p. 2). In Morris's view, the value placed on the individual, reflected in Kant's dictum that a man must be treated as an end and never as means, is the cornerstone of European ethics. This form of individualism, he claims, is distinctively a Western value, which is absent in the East. In my earlier work (Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 71–78), I have argued that the Indian conception of personhood is also individualistic, except that it manifests a different kind of individualism. To put it simply, while in the West the emphasis is generally on the individual *rights* in the sociopolitical sphere, in the Indian tradition the emphasis is on the individual's *obligations* and status in the ethical and spiritual domains. In the indigenous religious and spiritual traditions of India, the individual is held responsible for the consequences of his or her actions, and spiritual development is not possible except by one's own effort and self-realization.

Individualism is of course a highly controversial issue. On the positive side, individualism implies robust self-reliance, the idea of the inalienable right and inescapable obligation of the individual to act according to one's conscience and the courage to stand up against the oppression of an errant authority or a mindless mob. On the negative side, individualism is often laced with noxious self-serving, greed, and socially destructive self-interest. This kind of individualism has been despised by many, and rightly so in my opinion. There is also another, *epistemic* variety of individualism that sees knowledge as grounded in subjective experience, and this invokes a different type of fear—the desolate fear of Berkeleyan solipsism. It is not my purpose here to either defend or criticize individualism, for I am aware of both its positive and negative sides. In the present work, I shall try to steer clear of the varied concerns over the conceptualization of individualism versus collectivism in contemporary cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Triandis, 1990), and also avoid discussing the issue of whether the person as conceived in the Indian culture is an individual or a "dividual" (Marriott, 1976; Potter, 1980). My main concern here is whether or not there is, in the Indian culture, an ethicolegal conception of personhood that posits the *individual* as the basis of moral and legal concerns. As I shall presently try to show, in the intellectual and cultural tradition of India, the individual rather than the group has been the focus of moral responsibility for ages, regardless of the fact that individual rights have long been closely tied to the category or caste assigned by birth.

Personhood in the Cultural and Intellectual History of India

The concept of personhood is inextricably intertwined with conceptions of broader entities such as the state, law, religion, and cosmic order in which it is embedded. In the Indian context, unlike anything in the West, the most relevant aspect of the culture in regard to personhood is *dharma*, a Sanskrit term with many varied meanings such as law, religion, duty, or simply qualities and properties of persons and things. Of the many meanings of *dharma*, its ethicolegal conception as duty or rules of conduct is the most relevant here. The most authoritative work on this topic is P. V. Kane's (1930–1977) multivolume *History of Dharmaśāstra*, i.e., the history of the *science of dharma*. In it Kane defines *dharma* as "the privileges, duties and obligations of a man [*sic*], his standard of conduct as a member of the Aryan community, as a member of one of the castes, as a person in a particular stage of life" (1968, Vol. 1, p. 3). It is important to note here that first of all the *dharma* pertained to the Aryan community; indeed, it clearly excluded the aliens, called the *mlecchas*, just as the American concept of personhood excluded the nonwhite people. Second, its focus was on men rather than women; in Sanskrit, as in English, the primary term for personhood has been *puruṣa*, meaning *man*, and such usage conveys the privileged status of men and the lack thereof for women. Third, in India as elsewhere, rights and duties were defined separately for various segments of the society divided by age and social category or "caste." In the context of the Hindu *dharma*, caste implies *varṇa*, or one the four social categories—the priests (*brāhmaṇa*), warriors (*kṣatriya*), traders (*vaiśya*), and artisans (*śūdra*). The stages of life as conventionally defined are the four āśramas: first, a period of youth devoted to learning (*brahmacarya*); second, adulthood in which one plays householder (*gṛhastha*); third, late adulthood of a semiretired elder (*vānaprastha*); and fourth, old age in which one becomes a renunciative senior citizen (*saṁnyāsa*). This aspect of *dharma* has been conventionally designated as the *varṇāśrama dharma*.

It is well recognized in the literature that when compared with the Western tradition, the Hindu tradition emphasized *duties* of the individual more than *rights* (Sathe, 1967; Talghatti, 1974). According to this tradition, a *puruṣa* (or man) is enjoined to pursue four major goals in life: (1) conducting one's duties as prescribed for the person's caste and station in life (*dharma*), (2) the pursuit of wealth (*artha*), (3) the fulfillment of one's (legitimate) desires (*kāma*), and (4) the attainment of release (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of birth and death. In the millennial history of India prior to its modernization under the British rule, privileges and duties of persons were generally not defined by legislative or administrative bodies as in Europe. Rather, rules of conduct were codified by scholars in texts such as the *dharmasūtras* of Gautama, Āpastamba, and Vasiṣṭha (ca. 500–300 BCE), and in various codes of *smṛtis* like those of Manu and Yājñavalkya (ca. 200 BCE–300 CE).

Such scholars in law and jurisprudence were guided by (1) the ancient scriptures called the *Vedas* or *śrutis* in which truth was supposed to have been revealed to the sages, (2) the philosophical exposition of the scriptural doctrines in systems such as Mīmāṁsā, Sāṅkhya, and so on, as well as (3) the prevailing customs of their era. Regardless of their apparently "religious" background, these codes were not backed by institutions like the church or by any ecclesiastical authorities similar to the bishops or the Pope. The implementation was left to the king, whose enforcement authorities were guided by the codes prevalent in their region and era as elucidated by the *smṛtis*. Unlike the truths revealed in the scriptures, which were considered eternal, the codes of conduct described in the *smṛtis* were assumed to be subject to variation across time and region. Over the millennia, hundreds of interpretative essays (*nibandhas*) were composed; some 40 interpretive essays have been counted on the single topic of the adoption of children, and many more on other topics.

As noted, from the earliest times various rights and duties were extended only to the Ārya community, and within its boundaries they were distributed differentially among fourfold divisions by *varṇa*, or caste, and *āśramas*, or stages of the life cycle. Historical accounts of the Hindu society cast doubts as to whether such clear-cut divisions actually existed in any era. It is fairly clear, however, that except for very rare instances, caste membership was determined entirely by birth, which in turn determined occupation and the resulting socioeconomic status of the individual. While the two upper castes were accorded rights to initiation and the privilege to learn the scriptures, the same were denied to the lower castes and to all women. In addition to the four *varṇa* categories, a fifth category (*pañcama varṇa*) was added during some unknown era. Its members were forced to live outside the village boundaries, were denied many of the basic human rights, such as access to water, and were treated with the worst form of indignities, such as untouchability. The practice of untouchability and other forms of discrimination have been abolished since 1950, according to the Constitution of independent India that was framed, among others, by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, himself an ex-untouchable.

The age-old system of inequities is strongly and widely repudiated in contemporary India; only an insignificant minority dares to openly affirm the ancient code of the *Manusmṛti*. Indeed, in the past few years, the term *manuvāda* or *manuism* is becoming a political swear word used to denigrate various conservative parties. Along with many other parts of the world, India is slowly marching toward an egalitarian social system. Reverse discrimination and reserved quotas for the historically underprivileged sections of the communities in legislative bodies and institutes of higher education are prominent among the measures adopted to help restore social justice. The uneven distribution of rights is a persistent and widespread irritant that most of us would want to wish out of existence. The issue of how to establish equality and justice in the world, however important, is beyond

the scope of the present work. The issue that I wish to focus on here is the psychology of personhood, which is a necessary precondition for individual responsibility under any system of rights and duties.

The Individual as the Basis of Action and Its Consequences as Viewed in Indian Thought

Regardless of the regional, communal, and temporal variations in the conceptions of rights and duties, and of right and wrong, in the intellectual history of India there arose a worldview in which justice was supposed to be preserved by a moral order governed by a cosmic law. This conception of lawfulness of the universe has come to be known as the "Law of Karma." This law is conceived as a cosmic principle whereby each person must inevitably face appropriate consequences for all of his or her actions, whether good, bad, or indifferent. The Indian view of personhood is inextricably tied to a belief in a moral order defined by the Law of Karma. Belief in such a law is nearly universal throughout the known history of India; except for the small minority of the "materialist" Lokāyata school of thought, it is shared by most orthodox as well as unorthodox schools of Indian thought. Indeed, its influence extends to most Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists, and it is widespread even outside the Indian subcontinent wherever Buddhism has extended its influence. We shall later discuss the Law of Karma in some detail, first as part of the Advaita Vedāntic view of person, self, and identity in the next chapter, and then again in Chapter 6 in connection with its implications for the concept of self-as-agent. Here, it will be useful to see how in his *History of Dharmaśāstra*, P. V. Kane traces the historical roots of the individualistic notion of personhood and responsibility in the context of the Law of Karma.

Kane traces the origins of the concept of individual responsibility to the most ancient writings of the Indian tradition, namely the *Ṛg Veda* (6. 86. 5), where the sage Vasiṣtha prays: "May we not have to suffer for the sin committed by another."[3] "The strict doctrine of Karma would require," says Kane, "that there can be no transfer of good or bad *karma* from one man [*sic*] to another and a man cannot suffer for the sins of others." In support of this conclusion, he quotes the following statement from epic *Mahābhārata*, which crisply articulates the point: "Whatever deed a man does, whether holy or very unholy (terrible), the consequences of that are experienced by the doer alone, what have the relatives to do with that [?]"[4] (Kane, 1968, Vol. 5, pt. 2, p. 1595). Kane goes on to discuss a few apparent exceptions to this "individualist" principle in the vast literature on *dharma*. Such instances, he says, are "not meant to be taken literally" (p. 1596); they are just ways of impressing on the kings or the householders the importance of the duties of their respective roles.

Recently, Rama Rao Pappu (1987) has noted some exceptions to the thesis that karma is necessarily individual, nontransferable, and inexorable. But such

instances are rare. Indeed, in Indian thought, God has been believed to be a mere overseer of the proper functioning of the Law of Karma (*karmādhyakṣa*) and is powerless to interfere with its invincible operation. The *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (6.11) describes God as a mere witness (*sākṣin*), not an agent. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (6.5), Lord Kṛṣṇa asks Arjuna to recognize that a person alone is his own friend as well as enemy, and exhorts him to uplift himself by his own effort rather than choosing the path of ruin. In the same vein, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (5, 14–15) asserts that the Lord (*prabhu*) does not create agency for the people, nor does he act; all-pervading (*vibhu*), he takes on the sin or merit of no one. Yet, elsewhere in the *Gītā* (18.66) the Lord seems to forsake his impartiality by offering to release Arjuna from all his sins. Further, the many thinkers in the devotionalist (*bhakti*) tradition acknowledge the efficacy of God's grace in annulling the demerit of His devotees, which implies compromising the strict operation of the Law of Karma. But the idea of grace has been controversial, to say the least. Tukārām, a 17th-century saint–poet and famous devotee of the Lord Viṭhobā of Paṇḍharpur, says (in poem #2325) that liberation (*mokṣa*) is not a gift that God could bestow on anyone whom he would wish to pick by his sweet will[5] (see Tukārām, 1973, p. 398).

In any case, as noted by Halbfass (1991a), "Karma is supposed to be personal, i.e., attached to one individual being or life process" (p. 299). It is hard to find clear instances in the Indian tradition where shared or collective merit or demerit is accepted. Although members of a caste collectively share certain privileges as well as the lack thereof, these are considered but rewards or punishments of a person's own merit and demerit, respectively. That individuals are thereby induced to resign themselves to a life of lower social status and lack of privileges due to their own past actions is patently contrary to the egalitarian values of our era. Without trying in any way to justify this implication, it should be nevertheless clear that, by and large, the traditional Indian conception of personhood is essentially individualistic. Even under the current constitution that reflects the egalitarian principles enshrined by its architects such as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the individual person continues to be held responsible for his or her own actions.

Cognition, Affect, and Conation: The Psychological Conditions of Personhood

An upshot of the above discussion is that in the Indian tradition, as in the Western, the human individual is considered to be an *agent*. Most clearly, an agentic conception of personhood has been common to the Indian and Western traditions regardless of the many differences in terms of the varying conceptions of who qualifies to be a person, what their rights and responsibilities might be, and how justice could be ensured. There is another important similarity in Indian and Western conceptions of personhood in that cognition, affect, and conation are accepted as psychological conditions of personhood in both traditions. As noted

earlier, John Locke conceived of persons as having to have the capacities for understanding, feeling, and freedom of will, and that cognition, affect, and conation were conceived of as integral aspects of personhood by major thinkers of the Enlightenment. A similar conception appears in Indian thought since as early as the Upaniṣads. First, several Upaniṣads (e.g., *Praśna*, 4.9, *Maitrī*, 3.2–3) clearly conceive of man (*puruṣa*) or self (*ātman*) as agent (*kartā*). Moreover, the agentic individual is also simultaneously and repeatedly considered to be a knower (*jñātā*) and as one who enjoys and suffers (*bhoktā*) in several Upaniṣads.[6] The tripartite designation of the person as one who knows, feels, and acts (*jñātā*, *bhoktā*, and *kartā*) repeatedly appears in numerous Indian texts, including the highly influential *Bhagavad-Gītā*. If any set of ideas deserves to serve as a conceptual bridge between Indian and Western thought, these two trilogies definitely qualify, and in the remainder of this volume I intend to use them as such. Moreover, as noted earlier in connection with our discussion of Locke's view of personhood, cognition, affect, and action provide the conceptual foundation for a psychological model of person as a responsible human being. This idea needs further clarification at this point.

There is a basic logical connection between the concept of responsibility and the trilogy of cognition, affect, and conation. First, let us consider cognition. The possession of an adequate level of cognitive capacities is obviously an essential condition of responsible action. For want of such capacities, a person may not understand the prevailing rules of conduct and may fail to grasp the difference between proper and improper behavior under the given conditions. A deficit in the cognitive capacities, whether permanent or temporary, would definitely undermine the capacity for ethical conduct. For instance, a mentally challenged or intellectually "retarded" person, who may have never developed cognitive capacities necessary for comprehending the terms and conditions of a complex contract, cannot be expected to enter into a complex contract, nor can he or she be held responsible for abiding by its conditions. In a similar vein, one who has temporarily lost the use of normal cognitive capabilities under special circumstances, such as being dazed by drugs or being in a place where the local language is not understood, cannot be expected to behave responsibly as he or she would be under normal circumstances.

Second, the capacity to feel pleasure or pain is another equally important precondition for action in an ethicolegal context. A robot that lacks the capacity for pleasure and pain cannot be rewarded or punished, nor can it be held responsible for causing injury or loss of life. By contrast, the idea of rewarding and punishing animals does make sense to the extent that it is safe to believe that animals, like people, feel pleasure in eating or being caressed and pain when beaten or shocked. By the same token, it makes no sense to either feed, caress, or shock a robot to teach it new tricks, no matter how "intelligent" it might be. It is on the basis of the assumption that animals are conscious of pain and pleasure that the idea of

"animals' rights" makes sense (Salt, 1892/1980); nobody talks about the right of robots, for we cannot even imagine that they could experience pain or pleasure. A reward must be pleasurable or otherwise desirable in the eyes of the recipient. It is meaningless, for instance, to reward a blind person with a color TV or a teetotaler with a bottle of the finest whisky. Contrariwise, punishment would be meaningless if the recipient found it pleasurable or otherwise desirable. There is no point, for instance, in handing solitary confinement as punishment to a hermit who has voluntarily chosen to be a recluse. All this is simple common sense, and there should be no reason to belabor the point. Yet it seems necessary to say this against the background of the peculiar history of modern learning theory and behavioristic psychology where the discussion of the relationship of pain and pleasure with reward and punishment was generally avoided.

Toward the end of the 19th century, when E. L. Thorndike stated the famous laws of learning, he was well aware of the role of pleasure and pain in reward and punishment. While articulating the Law of Effect to help explain the connection between stimulus and response, he said: "The greater the satisfaction or discomfort, the greater the strengthening or weakening of the bond" (Thorndike, 1898). To the behaviorist Watson, however, the use of such terms as satisfaction or discomfort, pleasure or pain, was unacceptable, since they were unobservable, and hence inadmissible in the "science" of psychology. While commenting on Thorndike's use of such terms in the 1920s, Watson (1924/1970) scoffed at them by referring to them as "implanted by kind fairies" (p. 206). Decades later, Skinner, who was keener than Watson in avoiding mentalisms and in turning psychology into a physical science, decided that it was neither possible nor necessary to use terms like pleasure, pain, and satisfaction. Trying to bypass such terms, he redefined reinforcement purely in terms of externally observable features of the behavior of organisms such as their tendency to repeat or avoid a given class of responses (see Skinner, 1953, pp. 81–84). The price of such insistence on objectivity was the *objectification* of animals and the *depersonalization* of humans.

While depersonalization of human beings occurs in the behaviorist model because the psychologist refuses to recognize the experience of feelings, it results in real life when the capacity to feel emotions is lost or diminished under certain circumstances. Indeed, several psychological studies of the 1960s and the early 1970s demonstrate how the loss of capacity to experience appropriate emotions at appropriate time leads to depersonalization. Consider, for instance, one of Milgram's famous studies of obedience where experimental subjects placed in a group situation gave more severe shocks to learners for their mistakes than when the subject was alone; apparently the feelings of guilt for causing pain to the learner was diluted when distributed in a group (Milgram, 1964). Or consider individuals in urban crowds who seem to lose a sense of shame in not helping a person under attack (Latané & Darley, 1968) or in failing to stop vandalism (Zimbardo, 1970). In earlier times, a different, fictional variety of loss of normal feelings was

described by Albert Camus (1946/1967) in his novel, *The Outsider*. In it the hero does not feel sorry while sitting at his mother's funeral, nor guilty while shooting a stranger at someone else's suggestion for no good reason. Such emotional impropriety is said to result from the condition of alienation and existential despair. A more common variety of misplaced or blunted emotion is found among some schizophrenics and psychopaths. A psychopath's incapacity to feel guilty when appropriate might lead him or her first to crime and then to jail. A similar incapacity, when attributed to schizophrenia, might warrant therapy rather than incarceration. Crimes of passion are often viewed as deserving of leniency, because it is considered natural for a person to be unable to think clearly in moments of rage or extreme despair. In other words, unimpaired capacity to experience emotions appropriate to the situation is a necessary condition for fully responsible behavior. The capacity to feel emotions appropriate to the occasion is therefore an inalienable condition of personhood.

Finally, conation or the capacity to freely choose, initiate, and sustain a course of action toward an intended outcome is the third indispensable precondition for a person to be a responsible human being. A person is held responsible only for a consciously intended course of action and not for the consequences of inadvertent actions. Thus, a person is not held responsible for the injury of a bystander who is bumped when the person accidentally falls on a slippery floor or even for a death caused by accidentally triggering a gun. On the other hand, if a person is known to have intentions to hurt someone, he or she is considered culpable even if the actual consequences of the action are harmless. That is why complicity in planning a criminal act such as robbery or murder is thought to be worthy of punishment, even if the plans are aborted. Moreover, a person cannot be blamed for not helping another in crisis if his or her hands are tied at that time. Freedom and volition are undoubtedly the necessary conditions for responsible behavior.

The Rise and Fall of Personhood and the "Trilogy of Mind"

The processes of thinking, feeling, and volition taken together have been called the "trilogy of mind," and are often equated with the mind as a whole or with consciousness in general. In his historical account of the trilogy of mind, Hilgard (1980) has shown how the trilogy of mind was articulated throughout the 18th century in Germany and Scotland. He has noted that the Scottish school of "common-sense philosophers" from Thomas Reid (1710–1796) to Duglad Stewart (1788–1856) made the trilogy of mind a central part of a full-fledged *faculty psychology*. Influential authors such as Alexander Bain (1868) and G. F. Stout (1899/1929) in England emphasized cognition, feeling, and will. Stout's *Manual of Psychology* was published in 1899 and remained a most influential text for decades in the United Kingdom as well as India. During that era, the centrality of the trilogy for psychology seemed natural and unchangeable. According to Hilgard (1980, p. 114), McDougall's (1923) *Outline of Psychology* was the last major work featuring the trilogy of mind as a central topic. After that landmark, the joint treatment of cognition, affect, and conation rapidly declined.

Hilgard's authoritative account of the history of the trilogy of the mind says a lot about its rise but very little about the reasons for its decline. The only sentence he writes about this suggest that "... the fading of such a 'generally accepted' view may have coincided with the decline of what Gordon Allport called the synoptic theories" (Hilgard, 1980, p. 114). I have found Hilgard's suggestion most useful, for it offers important clues in understanding how and why, during the first half of the 20th century, North American psychology witnessed the simultaneous decline of the trilogy on the one hand and of personhood on the other. Allport's (1940) paper, which was cited by Hilgard in this connection, defends *synoptic* (i.e., holistic) theories as being useful in the study of personality; this was in contrast to the analytical or molecularistic viewpoints recommended by Arthur Bills' (1938) criticism of Allport's (1937) pioneering work in personality. Bills' main criticism was that in his account of personality, Allport had failed to adhere to the credo of science, which he described as empirical, mechanistic, quantitative, nomothetic, analytic, and as characterized by the use of operational concepts (Bills, 1938, p. 378).

Allport did not disagree with this characterization of the scientific credo; in fact, he cited observations from his own historical survey of psychology showing that psychology had in fact moved in that direction over the previous half century. What Allport tried to argue in his own defense was that the natural science perspective is in fact inimical to the study of personhood and he pleaded for some indulgence in order to accommodate such study. "Why not allow psychology as a science—for science is a broad and beneficent term—to be also *rational*, *teleological*, *qualitative*, *idiographic*, *synoptic*, and even *nonoperational*?" asked Allport (1940, p. 26, emphasis original). Even a superficial examination of the terms italicized in this quote would indicate how they are essential to the study of personhood, and how the opposite orientation is inimical to it. I have discussed the issue elsewhere in greater detail (Paranjpe, 1991a; 1998). Here, a brief indication of the basic points is necessary.

For the founding fathers of modern psychology, the main departure from tradition was the application of the natural science approach to the study of human beings. For behaviorists such as Skinner, this meant following Francis Bacon, and replacing philosophical speculation, rationalist argumentation, and teleological explanation with, respectively, scientific experimentation, empirical observation, and causal explanation. As natural scientists, psychologists must restrict their investigation to external stimuli or other observable factors in the environment that caused a given behavior, say, trigger pulling or ingestion of poison, and they must be unconcerned with the reasons and intentions behind it. The psychologists should be like the physicists and biochemists, who may ascertain the precise nature

of the impact of a bullet or poison that must have caused a death, but who leave it for the coroner to decide whether the death was accidental, suicidal, or homicidal. After all, motives, intentions, or reasons behind an action are neutral to the physicochemical causes that might bring about the intended result; the impact of a bullet or the chemical action of a poison will lead to the same consequence regardless of who might have shot the bullet or fed the poison, and with what intention. Insofar as the scientific model restricts itself to causal analysis, it has little to add to the study of personhood as an ethicolegal concept. By contrast, notwithstanding its general affinity to the natural science model and its use of empirical methodology, the Piagetian approach has fashioned ways to study moral reasoning, thereby accommodating the ethicolegal view of personhood. If being a person implies having intentions and translating them into action, then avoiding teleological explanations implies a banishing of personhood. We shall return to a detailed discussion of the issue of teleological versus mechanistic accounts of behavior in Chapter 6, which is devoted to the self-as-agent.

The quantitative and nomothetic approaches are another feature of the scientific credo that modern psychology tried to adopt. "Nomothetic" implies an approach designed to discover general or universal laws. Newton's laws of motion and the precise quantitative methods of measuring motion of celestial and terrestrial objects are obvious examples of the success of the natural scientific approach. Certainly such laws apply to human bodies as well as to lunar objects, as do the laws of electricity that help explain the nature of electrical and magnetic potentials in the brain. However, human behavior is governed not only by the universal laws of physics and chemistry, but also by written laws passed by legislators and by unwritten rules of conduct that evolve in communities. What advocates of nomotheticism and universal generalization, from Bills (1938) through Eysenck (1954) to Poortinga (1993), tend to ignore is that understanding persons implies judging their actions in relation to socially constructed codes of conduct that vary from time to time and across communities. What is important in the sociolegal context is to see whether a particular act of a particular person conforms to local regulations of the time. This is where qualititative evaluations of the act matter the most, not quantitative measurements demonstrating their conformity to universal laws. As well, ethicolegal judgments pertain to particular actions of particular persons, such that knowing how the universal laws apply in regard to the action(s) in question is irrelevant. During the 1930s through the 1960s, the understanding of particular persons was the concern of only a minority of "personologists" such as Henry Murray (1938/1962), Gordon W. Allport (1946), and Robert W. White (1952/1966). Of the small number of personologists, Allport (1961) was often alone in defending the "idiographic" approach that focuses on single individuals. Many, like Arthur Bills and Hans Eysenck, rejected—even denigrated—such a focus on particular persons in the name of science. Eysenck, in particular, asserted the nomothetic viewpoint by invoking (albiet in a translated version) a medieval scholastic dictum: "*scientia non est individuorum*," i.e., science does not deal with individual cases (see Eysenck, 1952, p.18). In the same vein, Robert Holt (1962) insisted that general laws of probability as understood and applied by actuaries are good enough for the psychologist's business of prediction of individual behavior. Further, Holt (1962) ridiculed Allport's appeal for understanding unique individuals from their own vantage point by declaring that "understanding is the subjective effect arrived at by artists, not by scientists" (p. 389).

The immense success of the natural sciences depends at least partly on their strategy to divide entities or phenomena to be studied into their component parts. This analytical approach is applied to psychology in a couple of different ways: in considering reflex responses or stimulus–response units as basic building blocks of behavior and in focusing on innumerable "variables" as determinants of behavior as psychologists routinely do. While such analytic strategies are undoubtedly useful in their own right, their usefulness, if any, is limited in understanding persons in an ethicolegal sense. For, in the ethicolegal context, the conduct of the person must be placed in the broader sociocultural milieu, which warrants a synoptic (i.e., holistic) view of the person. It is my impression that the preference of an analytic over a synoptic view under the dominance of the scientific perspective has resulted in compartmentalizing the subject matter of psychology. Thus, cognition, emotion, and motivation were treated as if they were separate components rather than differing aspects of the integral functioning of the person as a whole. Looking at the accounts of child development first from a Piagetian cognitive perspective and then from a Freudian psychodynamic viewpoint, one begins to wonder if prelogical thinking and the Oedipal complexes occur in the same children or in separate ones.

The separate treatment of cognition and affect has led to the sequestering of cognitive psychologists from behaviorists so as to discourage their interaction. At the same time, the assumption of cognition and feeling as separate phenomena has led to the strange notion that they somehow interact. Moreover, the fractionation of the trilogy of the mind has led to sterile controversies over which comes first, cognition or feeling, in either temporal order or in order of importance (Zajonc, 1980, 1984; Lazarus, 1982, 1984). The ultimate manifestation of the analytic approach is of course in the molecularization of the mind illustrated in E. B. Titchener's (1896) fruitless search for the elements of consciousness. The psychologists' flair for concocting countless "variables" to account for behavior is another instance of molecularization. Now, whether the contemporary computer models will be able to analyze mental phenomena in terms of strings of irreducible 1s and 0s is yet to be seen.

The early behaviorists declared the study of mind to be outside of the scope of the natural sciences, because the mind cannot be objectively observed. Later, the logical behaviorists denied the existence of the mind because it militated against physicalism, which they viewed rightly or wrongly as the cardinal principle of

science. Such an application of the tenets of science ruled out the study of the mind, including the mind's trilogy. Similarly, the commitment of the scientific credo to value neutrality rules out personhood as a legitimate subject matter, since personhood, as an ethicolegal concept, demands the consideration of values. If persons are moral agents, then it is legitimate to speak of a person's character as honest or dishonest, trustworthy or otherwise. Gordon Allport, widely recognized as the founder of the study of personality, gave serious thought to the idea of including "character" as a legitimate topic for study. However, he concluded that "*Character is personality evaluated, and personality is character devalued.* Since character is an unnecessary concept for psychology, the term will not appear in this volume" (Allport, 1937, p. 52; italics original). Indeed, it is ironic that notwithstanding his deep interest in and concern for ethical issues (illustrated by his appointment at Harvard as a Professor of Social Ethics), Allport became an instrument in demoting personhood in contemporary psychology and in promoting "personality" in its place.

To summarize this section, one of the side effects of the advent of the scientific credo in North American psychology was the dissipation of the trilogy of the mind and the banishment of personhood from its boundaries. Does it then follow that the restoration of personhood should also demand the rejuvenation of the trilogy of mind? This question demands a discussion of the ontic status of the trilogy of mind.

The Ontic Status and Cross-Cultural Relevance of the Trilogy of Mind

In Western thought, what offered ontic status to the mind was Cartesian dualism. Descartes (1641/1911, Vol. 1), who tended to equate the mind with the soul, the self, or the "I," asserted that "... I am ... a real thing and really exist; but what thing? I have answered: a thing which thinks (p. 152).... What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels" (p. 153).[7] Thus, Descartes included cognition, affect, and conation among the many processes that constitute the mind. Although the credit of articulating the significance of the trilogy might go legitimately to Locke, Locke borrowed Descartes's dualistic ontology notwithstanding his strong disagreements with Cartesian doctrines such as that of innate ideas.

Explicit and strong opposition to the Cartesian dualism started in Descartes' own lifetime. One of its earlier critics was Hobbes, a senior contemporary of Descartes, whose physical monist views have a considerable following to this day. However, a tacit but widespread acceptance of dualism shaped the ideas of many Enlightenment thinkers like Reid and Kant who elaborated the concept of personhood and entrenched it in Western thought. It is my impression that a more widespread and deep-seated repudiation of Cartesian ontology began in the early

decades of the 20th century with the increasing influence of the analytical philosophers and positivists of various stripes, who opposed metaphysics of all types. Within this context, Gilbert Ryle's (1949/1973) wholesale attack on the Cartesian model undermined the concept of human agency, thereby implicitly questioning the notion of personhood.

In my opinion, Ryle's objections are inextricably connected with the notions of causality in general and with the idea of mental causation in particular. Since these issues deserve more detailed treatment, I will postpone the discussion of the implications of Ryle's position to the consideration of the self-as-agent in Chapter 6. Here, let me suggest that supporting the notion of the trilogy of cognition, affect, and conation need not imply the acceptance of either Cartesian dualism or any other metaphysical doctrine. The trilogy may simply be considered to be a way of construing personhood or a way of speaking about persons. Call it a part of what Wittgenstein (1958/1967) refers to as a "language game" if you will, or think of it as a feature of the "conversational reality" as Shotter (1993) calls it. Placing it in this context avoids the conceptualization of cognition, affect, and conation as "faculties," and should also prevent their reification as well as attempts like those of the phrenologists to locate them in separate areas of the brain. If, as suggested, persons are part of the socially constructed world, then thinking, feeling, and willing could also be considered aspects of the way they are supposed to function. Again, as aspects of the functioning of persons as a whole, they need not be seen as separate entities or discrete processes, but as fully integrated features of the seamless domain of personhood.

When viewed as part of conversational reality rather than part of Nature, it is quite conceivable that the trilogy of the mind is not universal across the many distinct cultures of the world. However, the special relevance of the trilogy of cognition, affect, and conation to the present study is that this way of talking about persons is thoroughly compatible with the folk as well as classical traditions of India and the West. I am speaking here about the folk traditions first, because it is in and through folk traditions that varied conceptions of personhood flourish. Also, in my own experience of living in India and in English-speaking communities of the West, I find it equally relevant to speak of thinking, feeling, and willing. Indeed, ethicolegal implications of personhood would be impotent if they remained sequestered in classical thinking, without impinging on the folkways. As to the classical traditions, as I have indicated earlier and will try to show throughout the remainder of this volume, they are infused with the notions of persons as creatures who think, feel, and act in India as well as in the West. In this context, I wish to indicate my disapproval of the current fashion in contemporary cognitive science circles of denigrating concepts such as emotion or will as indicators of a "folk psychology," meaning primitive, unscientific ways of thinking (see Stich, 1983). After all, persons *are* the folk—individuals who would be held responsible for what they do, whether as "ordinary" men and women, or as "scientists" who

putatively know better. For the purpose of this volume, however, I have chosen to focus on classical, rather than on folk, traditions. This choice by no means suggests any disrespect on my part to folk traditions or folk wisdom, but rather is a matter of my disciplinary background, especially my lack of training in ethnographic methods essential for the study of folkways.

Having just suggested the legitimacy of cross-cultural comparisons, I now wish to enter a caveat. Although there are Sanskrit terms such as *prajñā*, *bhāva*, and *karma* that are roughly equivalent to what we now call cognition, affect, and conation, they are not exactly equivalent.[8] The relevant Sanskrit terms and their close and/or approximate equivalents will be discussed in separate chapters devoted to the self-as-knower, enjoyer/sufferer, and agent, respectively. Here I would just note an important matter of difference between Western and Indian approaches to these issues. In the Indian tradition, the focus is on the person or ego as knower (*jñātā*), enjoyer/sufferer (*bhoktā*), and agent (*kartā*). This implies a holistic view of personhood, and psychological processes of knowing, feeling, and acting are discussed as relevant to many different contexts, as I shall try to show later. The holistic emphasis counters, corrects, and complements the fragmentation of personhood typical of contemporary Western psychology. It also helps focus on the issue of personal identity. The significance of the differences between Western and Indian approaches cannot be pointed out at this stage; they can be brought forth and discussed only after parallel currents of thought are presented to the reader. Suffice it to say that I wish to try hard not to ignore, minimize, or exaggerate the importance of either the differences or the similarities between traditions.

Self and Ego

The self and ego are more or less equivalent concepts, both pertaining to the person. While the concept of personhood refers to individuals in general, both self and ego designate a particular person in contrast with, in relation to, or as different from others. Unlike the concept of person, self and ego are dialectical concepts such that a self implies a non-self or an *other*. Ego implies an alter, just as the concept of an organism implies an entity marked off from its environment and standing in some kind of relationship with it. There is an implicit boundary between the self and the non-self, even as the organism's skin separates it from the rest of the world. However, unlike the skin of an organism, the "boundary" separating the self from the world and/or others is not objective, discrete, and concrete, but subjective, often uncertain, symbolic, and "constructed." While the person is defined differently in terms of differing rights and duties in various societies, the self is construed and defined differently from one culture, theorist, and individual to another. Indeed, the idea of self is defined differently in differing contexts in terms of a bewildering array of concepts, metaphors, and perspectives.

There have been endless controversies in the Indian as well as Western traditions on the putative existence, nature, knowledge, and value of whatever that has been called the self.

It is my understanding that the debate over the nature of selfhood is inextricably connected with the issue of what, if anything, remains the same about the individual despite great changes in virtually every aspect of his or her personhood. This is a complex issue. It arises from the common observation that most persons seem to have an unmistakable experience of having been the same persons across time and space despite having minor as well as major changes in almost every aspect of themselves. Since change is the very opposite of sameness, saying that something has changed and has yet remained the same is a *paradox*. This paradox is at the root of what is called the problem of personal identity. It has engaged some of the best minds of both the Indian and Western intellectual traditions over the millennia. Despite many ingenious solutions suggested throughout the history, none has satisfied everyone. It is my impression that disagreements regarding this problem arise first of all over the question, "*What* is the self?" In traditional Western terminology, such questions belong to ontology, the study of issues concerning the nature of reality. A second source of difficulty relates to the nature of evidence believed to be necessary in affirming statements regarding whether the putative self exists or not. In post-Enlightenment terminology, this is an issue pertaining to epistemology, or theories concerning the nature of knowledge. A third type of issue concerning personal identity is: Why should sameness matter at all? For some, as for Locke, personal identity matters in the ethicolegal sphere, since only the same person that committed the alleged crime may be punished for it, not someone else. For some others, it is a deeply existential issue; finding the correct answer to the question "who am I?" is deemed extremely important, for a wrong answer would make a person imposter—living someone else's life, as it were. The identity issue thus involves consideration of justice and value, and thus belongs to ethics or axiology as well.

The problem of identity thus concerns ontology, epistemology, and ethics, three major branches that comprise most of philosophy as it is conceived of in the Western tradition. In addition, the question, "Who am I?" is directly concerned with both–the philosophical inquiry about nature of selfhood and with practical issues concerning social and personal identity. Answers to this question have profound social and existential implications. Imagine, for instance, a person who first thought of himself as a communist, but who later converted to a free enterprise ideology and is now considered a traitor and enemy by his former comrades. Or consider a person who initially strongly thinks of herself as a Christian, lives for decades as a devout nun, and sacrifices family life and its pleasures, only to lose faith in religion in her old age. Such a person might think that her entire life has been a sheer waste. Or think of a person who for years considers that being human simply means being a blob of organic matter in three-dimensional space, but later

begins to think of himself as God's special creation, or vice versa. The problem of identity thus relates to the most profound personal and ideological dilemmas. As such, the discovery of one's true selfhood becomes a most crucial issue in life. Small wonder, then, that "know thyself" was a most important exhortation in ancient Greece. Similarly, in ancient India, the sage Yājñavalkya exhorted that the Self ought to be *the* subject to know about and mediate upon.[9] In our own times, the self continues to be an important topic of inquiry to many philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, as well countless other persons of varied backgrounds.

Notwithstanding the long history of serious inquiry into the nature of the self, in contemporary psychology many researchers think as though the self originated with William James, the founder of modern psychology in America. Although James's (1890/1983) famous chapter on the self in his *Principles of Psychology*, published in 1890, contains a detailed discussion of several prominent Enlightenment thinkers, contemporary psychologists often tend to ignore their contributions. This is of course in keeping with the prevailing "presentism," as discussed in the previous chapter. During the heyday of behaviorism, James's contributions to the study of the self and consciousness were forgotten, since self and consciousness were taboo topics. A prominent exception to the general amnesia for James's contributions was the James–Lange theory of emotions (James, 1884; Carlson & Hatfield, 1992), which defined emotions in physical terms.

In the mid-1970s, as the influence of behaviorism receded, both consciousness and the self came back to the mainstream of psychology, with an accompanying revival of interest in James. During the first half of the 20th century, important contributions to the study of the self and ego were made by Charles Horton Cooley (1902/1964), George Herbert Mead (1934, 1925/1968), and Sigmund Freud (1923/1961). Cooley and Mead's lead was followed more in sociology than in psychology, and although significant contributions to the study of the ego continued to be made in the Freudian and neo-Freudian traditions, these were largely marginalized in academic psychology in North America. Regardless of the marginalization of the self in the mainstream of modern psychology, the literature on the self continued to grow. Surveys of this growing body of literature also appeared from time to time; notable among them are those of Gordon Allport (1943), Hall and Lindzey (1957), Gordon and Gergen (1968), and Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984).

In his survey, Allport (1943) identified the following different meanings that the term *ego* had acquired by the time of his writing: the self as (1) a knower, (2) an object of knowledge, (3) primitive selfishness, (4) dominance drive, (5) passive organization of mental processes, (6) a "fighter for ends," (7) a behavioral system, and (8) a subjective organization of culture. About a decade later, Allport (1955) critically considered seven more concepts closely related to self and ego: the bodily sense, self-identity, ego enhancement, ego extension, rational agent, self-image, and propriate striving. He also mentioned yet another definition of the self, suggested by P. A. Bertocci (1945), as a "knower, thinker, feeler, and doer—all in one blended unit of a sort that guarantees the continuance of all becoming" (Allport, 1955, p. 54).[10] Allport suggested his own term, called the *proprium*, meaning "all aspects of our personality that make for inward unity" (1955, p. 40). He hoped that such an inclusive definition would be sufficient to cover the broad range of phenomena referred to by a wide array of terms, and thereby stop the confusion created by the addition of an increasing number of new terms. But this term, even more than the many he surveyed, has itself fallen by the wayside, thus expanding the existing plethora rather than curtailing it. Nevertheless, with his extensive writings, his eclectic and inclusive approach, and his occasionally polemical but persuasive style, Allport helped rescue the concept from oblivion during decades of behaviorist dominance.

Hall and Lindzey's (1957) sympathetic survey of the various theories of the self in the first edition of their popular textbook of personality indicates that despite its marginalization, the self continued to inspire many psychologists of the mid-20th century. In the early 1960s, Gordon and Gergen (1968) conducted a survey of the literature on the self and published an excellent selection of articles that demonstrates the diversity and richness of conceptualization of the self in Western thought. According to their introductory essay, Gordon and Gergen selected over 40 short pieces for their anthology from a vast field of over 2000 publications in the disciplines of psychology and sociology. They identify the following as key issues and persistent dilemmas faced by scholars in this field: the self as (1) fact versus construct, (2) subject versus object, (3) structure versus process, and (4) single versus multiple. As I hope to show in forthcoming chapters, it would be fair to say that most of these issues were faced for centuries by generations of thinkers in India as well. Some two decades after the publication of Gordon and Gergen's survey of the literature, Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) published yet another survey of the literature on the self along with a critical and integrative summary. One of the interesting things that they point out is how the computer metaphor had started to seep into the literature, adding a new dimension to an already rich field of studies. In an article published in an issue of the *Journal of the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Susan Hales (1985) pointed out that many social psychologists had inadvertently rediscovered the self in the 1970s; in the same issue prominent scholars tried to analyze what was it that had been discovered and what did that discovery mean. If we add to all of this the material written on the affirmation and the denial of the self in the Upaniṣadic and Buddhist traditions of Asia, the literature would fill several libraries.

Against this background, it is neither necessary nor possible for me to offer yet another survey or one more attempt to identify the many meanings of the term self. Nor will I try to present a concise definition of selfhood or propose a new term like Allport's. Instead, I shall briefly summarize the seminal contributions of only

James, Cooley, Mead, and Freud, since their ideas have continued to inspire a good deal of work during the recent revival in psychological studies of selfhood, thereby dominating the current discourse on related topics. A selective summary of some of their important ideas, along with comments relevant to the topics to be discussed, should provide a backdrop against which the nearly forgotten contributions of earlier Western scholars, some selected ideas from the more recent publications, as well as some ideas of Indian origin probably less familiar to several readers may be presented and meaningfully discussed in the remainder of the volume.

William James: Self as the Current Thought in the Stream of Thoughts

In his classic account of the self, James says that

> *In the widest possible sense, a man's Self is the sum total of all that he CAN call his*, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his land and horses, and yacht and bank account. (James, 1890/1983, p. 279, emphasis original)

This definition of the self is clearly very inclusive; it spans almost all major aspects of personhood. In trying to conceptually organize this broad territory, James first distinguishes between the "I" and the "Me," by which he means, respectively, the self-as-subject and the self-as-object. The latter is further subdivided into three hierarchically ordered "constituents," with the spiritual Me at the top, the social Me in the middle, and the material Me at the bottom. This conceptual framework is schematically presented in Fig. 2.1. James gives a detailed account of what is involved in these three "constituents" of the Me, and describes what actions each of them prompts and what feelings they generate.

The material Me includes the body, clothes, home, and other possessions. At this level, self-seeking is manifest in the form of the body's appetites, one's tendencies to "deck" or adorn the body, and in the tendency for acquisitiveness. The corresponding feelings are fear of poverty or starvation, and either modesty or pride and vanity regarding personal wealth and possessions. The social Me

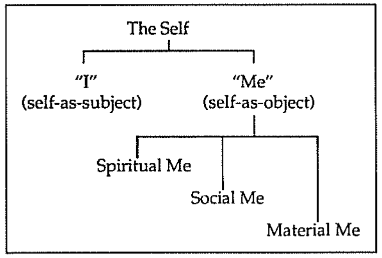

Figure 2.1. Schematic diagram of William James's concept of the self.

involves the many social roles we play; we may have as many social selves as there are groups, or even individuals, whose opinions we care about (p. 281). Our social self-seeking is manifest in our tendencies to seek company and to be noticed and admired; we may feel proud or vainglorious if appreciated by fellow beings and shameful or mortified if disapproved of and neglected. Sometimes a person's social selves are at variance with one another, like being an aggressive officer at work but a meek husband at home. As well, the social selves occasionally conflict due to differing or simultaneous demands from significant others, like having to finish tasks on one's job and do chores for the family at the same time. We usually are able to juggle the demands and resources well enough to maintain unity despite occasional role conflicts and to organize in a relatively harmonious manner a large number of varied activities for and with family, work, neighborhood, and various other groups. In regard to the third part of the empirical Me, namely the spiritual Me, self-seeking manifests in the form of intellectual, moral, or spiritual aspirations, which in turn may bring feelings of inferiority or superiority, guilt or purity. James defines the spiritual Me as "a man's [*sic*] inner or subjective being, his psychic faculties or dispositions, taken concretely; not the bare principle of personal Unity, or 'pure' Ego" (p. 283).

James's notion of the spiritual me is a subtle one. it is my observation from numerous discussions of this topic that the very word "spiritual," combined with James's expressions "psychic faculties ... taken concretely" commonly cause confusion, and many students find it difficult to distinguish the spiritual Me from the "pure Ego." Since some important issues tend to be ignored as a result of such confusion, it is necessary to add some comments and clarification. Part of the problem in understanding involves the negative connotations that certain terms such as "spiritual" and "faculties" have acquired over the years. Today the word *spiritual* connotes something ecclesiastical, religious, or supernatural, all of which are an anathema to many contemporary psychologists. Also, the concept of "faculties" first became disreputable (for it, like the concept of instinct, is a mere label that explains nothing), and then went out of vogue. What James means by "spiritual" in this context is, I think, what we currently call "mental" as opposed to physical. James's expression, "inner subjective being," suggests that his concept of the spiritual Me includes the innumerable "entities" that may have ever passed through one's mind—one's thoughts, wishes, dreams, doubts, and what have you—all taken together. Here again, James's expression "taken concretely" is confusing, for how can something as intangible as "subjective being" and as abstract as "psychic faculties" be taken concretely? I think what James wanted to suggest here is that, all entities like thoughts and dreams, and processes such as thinking and doubting, may be looked upon as the objects of one's thoughts, which are to be distinguished sharply from the "pure Ego," which is the subject who experiences the thoughts and processes. It is important to remember that the crucial distinction between the Jamesian "I" and "Me" is that the former is the self-as-

subject while the latter is self-as-object. The "I," or the so-called "pure Ego," is the "bare principle of personal unity," and as such must be distinguished from such countless mental entities as thoughts and dreams that emerge and disappear in the stream of consciousness.

The stream of consciousness is an expression made popular by William James. The metaphor of the stream may not have been an original contribution of James. He might possibly have encountered it in the work of Thomas Reid (1785/1975b), who described consciousness or operation of the mind as "flowing like the water of a river" (p. 116) about a century before James penned his chapter. It may be noted, incidentally, that a similar expression appears over a thousand years earlier in the work of Vyāsa in India, who uses the expression *mind–river* (*citta nadī*) in his commentary on Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (Ch. 1, aphorism 12). Like James, the Yoga system also makes a distinction between self-as-subject or the "seer" (*gṛhītṛ, draṣṭā*) on the one hand, and self-as-object or that which is "seen" (*grahaṇa, dṛśya*) on the other. Since the subject–object distinction is most crucial in both Western and Indian views of the self, and since it is not always clear, it is necessary to clarify it here. To help clarify it, it would be helpful to turn to Franz Brentano (1838–1917), a contemporary of William James (1842–1910) who explained and popularized that notion.

In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Brentano (1874/1973) pointed out that mental events are always characterized by "intentionality," which means that processes like thinking, recollecting, and dreaming are always directed toward something or other. In his oft-quoted statement Brentano says: "In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, and so on" (p. 88). Thus, a thought is always a thought about something, one always dreams of something, or has an attitude toward some object, and so on. The entities onto which the mental events are directed are called the "objects" of thought. James (1890/1983) used the word "Thought" (with a capital T) as a generic term to designate all types of "cognitive phenomenal events in time" (p. 349), which he also called "pulses of cognitive consciousness" (p. 322), or "conscious states." The Jamesian Thought thus includes mental events such as seeing, hearing, reasoning, recollecting, loving, and a hundred other ways in which our minds are alternately engaged (pp. 224–225). All such Thoughts are intentional in Brentano's sense. In the case of a process like seeing or hearing, the object to which they are directed may be a physical entity, such as the desk I see in front of me, or the neighbor's dog that I just heard barking. But imagining and thinking might be directed to a purely imaginary entity, like a mermaid, or the square root of minus one, for instance. The objects of Thought may be either tangible, such as a chair, or intangible, like the dream I had last night, or the idea that just passed through my mind a moment ago. Now, suppose I conceive of the entire collection of all the Thoughts that may have formed my stream of consciousness; collectively, they are the object of my current

Thought. Taken together, all my Thoughts that I can think of together constitute my spiritual Me, which is one of the constituents of the empirical Me, or the self-as-object, as distinguished from the "I," the self-as-subject in whose experience they appear.

The Jamesian pure Ego is not the spiritual Me, but the experiencing subject as opposed to the objects of experience. Husserl (1933/1977, pp. 66–67), a student of Brentano, conceived of subject and object as the two poles of consciousness, such that the pure Ego always remains unchanged as the self-identical subject-pole of intentional states of awareness, while consciousness shifts its focus from moment to moment from one object to another.[11] To understand what this means, we must stop looking outward at the world of objects "out there," so to speak and instead turn our attention inward toward the contents and processes of our own mind. James (1890/1983, p. 287) describes what happens when one turns one's attention inward: "When I try to remember or reflect, the movements in question, instead of being directed towards the periphery, seem to come from the periphery inwards and feel like a sort of withdrawal from the outer world" (emphasis original). This inner world is the territory of the stream of consciousness. As noted, taken together, the contents of the stream constitute one's spiritual Me. Although it is placed "higher" in James's hierarchy of selves than the material and social selves, it is still not the apex of selfhood; the apex is the pure Ego. Whether we dwell on the whole stream of consciousness or on specific Thoughts that inhabit there, we would still be encountering the self-as-object. To get to the pure Ego at the apex, we must move from the periphery of the territory of consciousness toward the "center of awareness," so to speak. As James puts it:

> If the stream as a whole is identified with the Self far more than the outward thing, *a certain portion of the stream abstracted from the rest* is so identified in an altogether peculiar degree, and is felt by all men as a sort of innermost center within the circle, of sanctuary within the citadel, constituted by the subjective life as a whole. (pp. 284–285; emphasis in original)

Notwithstanding such richly expressive metaphors as the "citadel" and "center within the circle" used by James, the description of the pure Ego remains enigmatic. One of the most important issues that complicates the matter is the putative *unity* of the "I," the self-as-subject. Its unity stands in sharp contrast with the obviously multifarious manifestations of the "Me": the many Thoughts, several social selves, and countless material objects with which the "I" feels now and then identified. According to James, reconciling the unity of the "I" in the face of the multiplicity of the "Me" is the "most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal" (p. 314). This puzzle may be termed the "problem of personal identity." James devotes a good portion of his chapter on the self to a discussion of this issue by presenting the positions of Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant, among others and by offering his critique of their views. We shall return to this issue in a later section of this chapter. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the distinction between

subject and object is a critical issue in the school of thought called the Advaita Vedānta, and this school and its rivals (Sāṅkhya and Yoga) offer very different perspectives on it than James's. Also, as we shall see in Chapter 3, such a distinction is implicit in the metaphor of the "center of awareness" that Erik Erikson (1968, p. 135) uses in explaining his view of personal identity.

Before closing our account of the Jamesian view of the self, it is necessary to take a brief look at James's discussion of an interesting question: "What is loved in 'self-love'?" In this connection, James (1890/1983) makes an observation that "each of us is animated by a *direct feeling of regard for his own pure principle of individual existence*" (p. 303, emphasis original). Although the word "existence" makes it sound as if he were suggesting something profoundly existential, I think James is referring here to the common observation that there is a tendency in living beings toward self-preservation. It is called and explained differently in different systems. The *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali (1978, 2.3, 9),[12] for instance, speaks of "abhiniveśa," a self-preserving tendency common to all living beings. This idea is akin to the currently popular notion of a "selfish gene," which suggests a fundamental tendency of all forms of life to cling to life (Dawkins, 1989). James (1890/1983) put this very simply: "A man in whom self-seeking of any sort is largely developed is said to be selfish" (p. 302). This basic self-seeking or "selfish" tendency manifests itself variously in human beings. To put it in the Jamesian perspective, one could say that it manifests in the form of seeking food and warmth as well as in possessing and preserving wealth at the material level, in seeking reputation and dominance at the social level, and in cultivating virtues or in trying to ensure otherworldly well-being at the spiritual level. James's views in this regard are best summarized in his own words:

> To have a self that I *care for*, nature must first present me with some *object* interesting enough to make me instinctively wish to appropriate it for its *own* sake, and out of it manufacture one of those material, social, or spiritual selves ... (p. 304).
> [W]*e see no reason to suppose that "self-love" is primarily, or secondarily, or ever, love for one's mere principle of conscious identity*. It is always love for something which, as compared with that principle, is superficial, transient, liable to be taken up or dropped at will. (James, 1890/1983, p. 307; emphasis original)

In agreement with James, we may grant that self-seeking is based on naturally given or "instinctual" tendencies to seek food, bodily comfort, sex, company of fellow humans, and so on, and that, at the beginning of the life cycle, selfhood is defined in terms of objects to which we are naturally attracted. But obviously we are not stuck for life with the attraction for such objects; naturally attractive things such as toys, games, and even sex lose their appeal at some time or another. Another such attraction defines our "raw" selfhood, it is open to be cultivated in different ways under the impact of societal influence and individual choice. What James is suggesting here is that our adult self is "manufactured," so to speak. To put it differently, the mature self is cognitively and/or socially constructed, or

rather, "fabricated." If what is loved in ordinary human lives is mostly "superficial, transient and liable to be taken up or dropped at will," as James put it, then it should in principle be possible for us to radically alter the course of our lives if we so desire. I wish to emphasize this idea since it suggests the possibility of the empowerment of the individual in the task of self-transformation. As we shall see later, several schools of Indian thought suggest systematic ways of self-transformation by selectively dropping off many of the superficial and transient things that we come to love in our lives.

C. H. Cooley: A Closed and Nasty Self versus an Open and Lofty Self

Following the lead of William James, Charles Horton Cooley (1902/1964) extended the conceptualization of the self to the social sphere. He emphasized the social nature of the self by noting that "There is no sense of 'I,' as in pride or shame, without its correlative sense of you, or he, or they" (p. 182). In other words, there is a basic dialectic between the *self* and the *other*; the self and the other are born together, because the very act of self-definition sets the boundaries of selfhood, thereby marking off the characteristics and territories of otherness. If I call myself a radical, have-not, atheist, or senior, then I automatically distinguish myself from, respectively, the conservatives, haves, theists, and youth as the "others" with whom I implicitly establish various kinds of relationships. At the core of the self, Cooley sees a peculiar sort of a "feeling," a feeling that turns to elation and puffs up the "ego" with praise, and to utter humiliation when the ego deflates under censure. With his famous metaphor of the "looking glass," Cooley (1902/1964, p. 184) describes how we very often tend to see our reflections in the eyes of others, even imagine what our parents, friends, competitors, or enemies think of us, and feel happy when our image appears positive and vice versa. Cooley's insightful analysis of such interpersonal or social implications of the self paved the way for important developments in social psychology and related disciplines for decades: Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison processes, which emphasizes the continual self–other comparisons that deeply affect our experience and behavior; Goffman's (1959) work on the "presentation of the self in everyday life"; and research on "impression management," i.e., social maneuvers that we engage in while trying to enhance our image in the eyes of others (Schlenker, 1980).

One aspect of Cooley's view of the self, which I think is often neglected, is his metaphor of the self as a "citadel," which he seemed to borrow from James and to develop in his own distinctive way. For Cooley, that citadel can be either closed and protected from the outside influence or is left open for a two-way expression of mutual love between the self and others. It is better to present Cooley's ideas in his own words:

> [S]elf feeling may be regarded as in a sense the antithesis, or better perhaps, the complement of that disinterseted and contemplative love that tends to obliterate the sense of divergent individuality. Love of this sort has no sense of bounds, but is what we feel when we are expanding and assimilating new and immediate experience, while self-feeling accompanies the appropriating, delimiting, and defending of a certain part of experience; the one impels us to receive life, the other to individuate it. The self, from this point of view, might be regarded as a sort of citadel of the mind, fortified without and containing selected treasures within, while love is an undivided share in the rest of the universe. In a healthy mind each contributes to the growth of the other: what we love intensely or for a long time we are likely to bring within the citadel, and to assert as part of ourself [*sic*]. On the other hand, it is only on the basis of a substantial self that a person is capable of progressive sympathy or love. The sickness of either is to lack the support of the other. There is no health in a mind except as it keeps expanding, taking in fresh life, feeling love and enthusiasm; and so long as it does this its self-feeling is likely to be modest and generous; since these sentiments accompany that sense of large and the superior which the love implies. But if love closes, the self contracts and hardens: the mind having nothing else to occupy its attention and give it that change and renewal it requires, busies itself more and more with self-feeling, which takes on narrow and disgusting forms, like avarice, arrogance and fatuity. (Cooley, 1902/1964, pp. 187–188)

Cooley's rich metaphors and lucid expressions drive home his point quite effectively. However, it seems to me that the moralistic and prescriptive message of his words has been relatively neglected despite the renewed popularity of his work in the 1980s, probably because it is at variance with the value-free stance that dominates the contemporary psychology's Zeitgeist. Among some of the earlier exceptions to this general trend of neglect are Gordon Allport (1954/1958) and Erik Erikson (1968), and among the more recent ones I could name Edward E. Sampson (1988) and Hoshmand and Ho (1995). Let me note a few points from their work that are relevant here.

In *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954/1958, pp. 43–45) notes the observations of Piaget and Weil (1951), showing that children gradually develop a sense of belonging to various social groups, and that most children never enlarge their sense of belonging beyond the family, city, and nation. Allport's comment on this observation was as follows: "While the national orbit is the largest circle of loyalty that most children learn, there is no necessity for the process to stop there" (pp. 44–45). This remark expresses his wish to see that people develop a sense of loyalty to the whole of humanity, a sentiment that runs through most of Allport's social psychological writings. In *Becoming*, Allport (1955, p. 45) connects this with his view of selfhood by coining the term *ego-extension*, a dialectical counterpart of Cooley's notion of the constricted and narrow self. The concern here is simply striving for the fullest possible expansion of the in-group that a person calls *mine*. Thinking along similar lines, Erik Erikson puts it differently. He bemoans the fact that today humanity is divided into innumerable mutually warring "pseudo-species," rather than being united into a single humankind. Like Allport, Erikson (1968) repeatedly expresses in his writings his concern and longing for a "world-

wide identity" (see, e.g., p. 42). Cooley was explicit about the lack of health in the narrow and constricted boundaries of self; he even considered narrowness and selfishness disgusting. Erikson echoes similar sentiments about those who get jingoistically stuck on the loyalty for a group, hating everyone outside.

Working within the Freudian model, the well-known studies of the authoritarian personality by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) also suggested that ethnocentrism and bigotry are indicative of a stunted or pathological ego development. Although psychologists have been successful in creating an awareness in the public at large that seeking psychiatric or psychological help in various forms of neuroses is acceptable—even respectable—they have been unsuccessful in developing a matching awareness about egotistical or totalitarian ego boundaries. We cannot even imagine someone going to a clinical psychologist to ask for help in curing his or her bigotry; for many psychologists do not seem to share Cooley's view of narrow ego boundaries as pathological. Nor have they been able to develop ways to assist individuals in expanding their ego boundaries, should someone ask for such help. At any rate, we shall consider certain aspects of the narrow closed boundaries of the self in our discussion of A. G. Greenwald's (1980) concept of the "totalitarian ego" in Chapter 4.[13]

Loyalty to humanity as a whole is, like motherhood, an ideal common to most cultures. The ancient Greek ideal of being a "citizen of the world" (cosmopolitan) is an instance of this. In the Indian tradition, an ideal person is often described as treating the whole of humanity as one's own family (*vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*), and it is reflected in the description of the ideal person in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (12.13). There is some recent work in psychology that suggests that Eastern and Western cultures are different in the ways in which they promote the development of relatively more individualistic or collectivistic egos. The observations of Edward Sampson and David Ho may be mentioned in this context insofar as they are relevant to the themes under discussion.

In his paper, Sampson (1988) mentions two conclusions drawn by Heelas and Lock (1981) from their cross-cultural studies. First, that people in all cultures draw a boundary between the self and the nonself, and second, that *where* the line is commonly drawn varies extensively from culture to culture. Sampson refers in this context to the work of David Bakan (1966), who suggested that there are two mutually opposing tendencies that simultaneously coexist within each individual. The first, called *agency*, manifests itself in the isolation, alienation, and aloneness of the individual and in the urge for self-assertion, self-protection, and self-aggrandizement. The other tendency, called *communion*, manifests itself in the urge to become part of, or seek union with, something larger than the limited field of the individual. In my view, the self–nonself boundaries continually contract and expand when agency dominates communion and vice versa. According to Sampson, societies and cultures differ in terms of whether they promote a self-contained individualism with emphasis on firm and exclusive boundaries between self and

nonself, or "ensembled individualism," in which boundaries tend to be fluid and inclusive. In Sampson's view, contemporary American society promotes self-contained individualism, which tends to enhance individual freedom, responsibility, and achievement. By contrast, he says "[e]lements of Japanese, Chinese (Confucian), and Islamic indigenous psychologies offer ensembled type of individualism" (Sampson, 1988, p. 17).

Arguing along similar lines, Hoshmand and Ho (1995) suggest that Western conceptions of the self emphasize the centrality and sovereignty of the individual, and contrast them with Eastern conceptions that emphasize relatedness instead. In the latter context, Hoshmand and Ho note the importance of relatedness in the Confucian tradition, and mention the work of Markus and Kitayama (1991), who discuss the fundamental relatedness of individuals promoted in many Asian cultures. They point out that Confucianism overemphasizes relatedness so as to stifle individual expression and creativity and it promotes authoritarian sociopolitical institutions. From reading Hoshmand and Ho's comments in this regard, it seems to me that, while self-contained individualism promotes individual initiative and achievement, it also fuels greed and uncaring families. By comparison, some Eastern cultures promote ensembled individualism, which leads to interdependence and harmony on the one hand, but stifles creativity and encourages social oppression on the other. It is possible that such East–West comparisons tend to oversimplify the complex issues of individualism and collectivism and perhaps overgeneralize from selective observations. Nevertheless, the conceptual distinctions between individualist and collectivist styles of the development of the ego and the evaluation of their relative merits make sense. Such developments in the study of the self enrich the legacy of Cooley.

G. H. Mead: The Social Construction of Selfhood

Like Cooley, Mead (1934),[14] too, emphasized the *social* aspects of the self. He affirms the priority of the society, particularly the social context in which an individual is born and socialized. It is in the process of socialization, particularly in the family, that a person acquires his or her "self-definition" in terms of one's station in life: as son of Mr. and Mrs. so and so, in terms of other kinship relationships, in terms of the race and social class to which one belongs, and so on. Mead distinguishes human society sharply from nonhuman societies by pointing out that humans use *symbols* in communicating with other members of their own species rather than only *signs* as nonhuman species do. Unlike signs, which have a fixed relationship with what they signify, symbols are open to alternative interpretations. Thus, when the mother nods her head, it might mean either a clear yes, or a "maybe," or even a mild prohibition, and the child must *interpret* what mother's underlying *intention* might be in giving the nod. Someone pointing a finger at the door may mean either shut it or open it depending on the context—

whether it is too hot or cold in the room, whether a need for privacy is suggested, and so on. During the process of growing up, human individuals acquire the ability to interpret the intentions behind the symbols communicated by others primarily by learning to take the "perspective of the other," i.e., by learning to put oneself in the other's shoes, so to speak. According to Mead, the self is defined by the process of "symbolic interaction" within the context of human communities. Meltzer (1972) summarizes Mead's view of the self in the following way: "In referring to the human being as having a self, Mead simply means that such an individual may act socially toward himself [*sic*], just as toward others. He may praise, blame, or encourage himself ... and so forth" (p. 8). By the same token, an individual learns to speak to him- or herself and to carry on conversations among his or her own many different selves, as it were. From the Meadian viewpoint, having such silent internal conversations is what the mind is all about.

Mead was the first one to propose a systematic model of human development. Decades later, Erik Erikson developed a more elaborate model of psychosocial development by integrating Mead's social psychological model with Freud's psychoanalytical model of psychosexual development. We shall examine Erikson's theory at length in the next chapter. Until about the mid-1960s, there seemed to be little direct influence of Cooley and Mead on psychology, aside from the indirect influence through Erikson's work. However, social psychology as taught within the discipline of sociology continued to be dominated by Mead's symbolic interactionism (see Lindesmith & Strauss, 1968; Cardwell, 1971; Lauer & Handel, 1977). Of the many sociologically oriented formulations of the self, it will be useful to note some aspects of Peter Berger's (1966a) view of social identity. As noted in the previous chapter, Berger and Luckmann's (1966) view of the social construction of reality was based on the insights of Mead, Mannheim, Schutz, and Piaget, among others. Within this social constructionist framework, Peter Berger (1966a) defines social identity as follows: "*Identity, with its appropriate attachments of psychological reality, is always identity within a specific, socially constructed world.* Or, as seen from the viewpoint of the individual: *One identifies oneself, as one is identified by others, by being located in a common world*" (p. 111, italics original).

Identity, as suggested here, may be seen as the "location' in a socially constructed world. Thus, when a man identifies himself as an engineer in such and such company, a member of a certain church or a particular party and so on, he is defining where he belongs, where he is situated in the worlds of work, religion, politics, and so on. Such a person may relocate himself on the social map by taking up a new job, by converting to another religion, or by changing his political affiliation, and so on. Such relocation might happen because of a conscious and deliberate choice and might be preceded and/or accompanied by a cognitive reconstruction of the person's worldview, say from Catholicism to communism and so on. Alternatively, one may get forcibly uprooted because of war or drought,

or may be involuntarily converted to a different ideology, and cognitive construction might follow in the process of relocation and redefinition of the self. The point of all this is that, from a cognitive and social constructionist point of view, selfhood may be seen as largely open to change by one's own decision and choice, although some of its aspects may be fixed and unchanging (such as one's membership in a racial community being unalterably defined by the accident of birth, for instance). The point raised here can be easily seen as being in tune with James's ideas mentioned earlier: that of "manufacturing" a social self, and of many aspects of the self being "liable to be taken up or dropped at will." This is an important issue, for it opens the door for a deliberate and planned reconstruction of selfhood guided by explicit values and goals.

The social constructionist view is beginning to have more of a following in psychology in recent years, although the inspiration often comes not from Berger and Luckmann, but from other earlier thinkers such as Giovanni Vico (1668–1744), Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). Prominent among the contemporary constructionists are Kenneth Gergen, Rom Harré, and John Shotter. Some of their work will be referred to later on where appropriate.

The Freudian Ego: Controller of Impulses and Interpreter of Meanings

Freud offers a distinctive perspective on personhood and the ego, which has spread its influence greatly on the public at large, but not so greatly on the mainstream of academic psychology in North America. Freud conceived of the ego as a differentiated region of the id, which he thought of as a reservoir of biologically endowed libidinal energy that formed the psyche from birth. In his view, the id impulses, or passions, operate according to the pleasure principle, which is blind to consequences arising from either the realities of the external world or from the ethical demands of the social world. Freud assigned the ego the task of protecting the individual from the dangers of the outside world and equipped it with reason and ability to control the body's movements. This implies that the ego accounts for cognition and conation, while the id involves all of affect. Thus, between the two of them, the ego and the id account for the trilogy of mind. There is no ambiguity in Freud's model as to the relative strengths of reason, will, and affect; the ego barely manages to keep the unruly id under control. Indeed, Freud (1923/1961, p. 25) himself compared the ego to the rider of a horse of greatly superior strength with the use of borrowed forces. Freud equates the whole individual or psyche to the id, and conceives of the ego as but a differentiated portion of the id that arises for, and remains to be in the service of, the id. Freud's theory provides an elaborate account of how the ego develops through the experiences of childhood and continues to channel psychic energies in habitual ways.

According the Freud, the newborn child's psychic energies are naturally

directed to the mother, the provider of nutrition and succor. She is the child's first and foremost object of emotional investment, or *cathexis*. Focusing primarily on the male child, Freud thought that the young boy encounters the father as a rival in winning mother's attention and love, with the father becoming a prime target of his hatred, or negative cathexis. But the father is also often an indulgent provider and protector, and is too powerful and desirable to wish away. The child is thus in a quandary, insofar as he (and Freud spoke mainly, although not exclusively, of the male child) must balance the mutually opposing forces of hatred and love for the father. The little boy is said to resolve this problem, called the Oedipus complex, by identification with the father figure, and by internalizing his image as the ego-ideal and his dictates as the conscience. The ego-ideal and the conscience together are said to constitute the superego, which becomes a differentiated portion of the psyche. With the resolution of the Oedipal dilemma, then, the ego becomes a controller of forces arising from three sides: the demands of the congenital id from within, from the superego developed during childhood and lodged inside the psyche, and from the demands of reality from the outside.

The ego is said to channel the id impulses in various ways: by repressing them back into the unconscious, or by deflecting them onto desirable or harmless targets, i.e., through sublimation, projection, and other such defense mechanisms. While the ego is supposed to be on day duty, so to speak, as an "energy manager," at night it doubles as a censor, deleting all the nasty expletives threatening to barge into the civil territory of awareness and dressing up unruly thoughts in innocuous garbs if and when they manage to enter the dreams. This latter task involves meaning-making through the manipulation of symbols, and the understanding of their true meaning requires interpretation by an analyst who has been analyzed during the process of training. As noted by Ricoeur (1970), the Freudian model can be properly understood as an amalgam of the metaphor of energy exchange, following from Freud's natural science background and his Helmholtzian legacy, and the interpretive aspect derived from the exegetic, hermeneutic, and literary traditions.

Couched in the language of energy and grounded in 19th-century physiology, Freudian psychodynamics made deep inroads into the establishment of American psychiatry. However, the Freudian claims to scientific status did not find affinity with the behaviorist views of science. For behaviorists such as Skinner, the ego looked much like a homunculus, which had no place in science. The fact that in *Ego and the Id*, Freud (1923/1961) himself referred to the ego as the "cortical homunculus" (p. 26) simply made the matter worse. Against this background, Freudian psychology became marginalized within the behavioristically dominated academic psychology in North America. Several neo-Freudian models, however, are making an impact, the object-relations perspective being most prominent among them (Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1965). In my view, accounting for the investment of *affect* is the greatest strength of such models. To the extent that object-relations psychology focuses on the investment of affect onto self-objects,

it may be considered a legacy of the energetics aspect of the Freudian model. It is often said to use a plumbing metaphor; it is as if what one experiences depends on what the ego lets out from or pushes back into the reservoir of the id—or what leaks out regardless. The legacy of the interpretive aspect survives in the form of the metaphor of the text and is supported by allies in the growing popularity of hermeneutics.

In the previous chapter, the hermeneutic or interpretive implications of Freudian psychoanalysis were noted in connection with the work of Ricoeur, Lesche, and other authors. While Carl Lesche (1985) points out the importance of the interpretation of the meaning of contents of dreams and the like in the analysand's self-understanding, David Bakan (1958) emphasizes the importance of the interpretation of symbols. In *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition* (1958), Bakan argues that Freud's approach to dream interpretation was analogous to and followed from the techniques for deciphering the symbolic meanings conveyed by the words of the scripture (the Torah), which were developed in the mystical tradition of the Kabbala. Without going into the validity of Bakan's claims, it may be noted that Freud's interpretive techniques were aimed not at understanding the scriptures, but at the analysand's self-understanding with the help of a trained analyst. Given the focus in the present volume on self-understanding, I would like to note interesting parallels and differences between the hermeneutic approaches of psychoanalysis and Advaita Vedānta. As we shall note in the following chapter, the Advaitists also use interpretive techniques in self-understanding. However, unlike the Freudian approach the Advaita asks interested persons to focus directly on the "scriptural" texts—the Upaniṣads—to help discriminate the transcendental Self beyond her or his ego (*ahaṁkāra*), which is wrapped up in ongoing thoughts and emotions. Also, while the Kabbalistic mysticism focused on symbolic meanings hidden in the subtext, the Advaitic mysticism tries to help attain the direct experience of the self-as-subject in an altered state of consciousness. To help understand such parallels and differences, it is necessary to clarify the differing meanings of the terms self and ego and the varied conceptions of self-understanding associated with them.

The Many Meanings of, and Many Perspectives on, the Self and Ego

The views of self presented above are just a few of a bewildering array of differing definitions and diverse perspectives that populate the vast literature on the self. In addition to these conceptions of the self and ego there is a long list of hyphenated terms used by psychologists, all including the term self or ego in them: self-esteem, self-image, self-actualization, self-realization, self-identity, ego-enhancement, ego-identity, and so on. There are countless publications on the concept of self-esteem alone. Psychologists have devised numerous methods for their empirical investigation (Wylie, 1974/1979). Regardless of the differences among them, the myriad concepts of or about the self and ego all pertain to the domain of the person. Some, such as James's, cover the whole of the person; others, such as Cooley's and Freud's, indicate a differentiated part of region of personhood. While some, such as Mead, place the self squarely in the interpersonal space, others, such as Freud, examine the ego primarily within the intrapersonal sphere. There is a good deal of difference among the different conception of the self in terms of their relative emphasis on one or another aspect of the trilogy of mind. Sometimes the term *self* refers to one of the many Jamesian selves, or a temporary phase of it, while at other times the same term is used to designate something perpetual that unites the many changing aspects of personhood of selves into a Self—or the "Self of selves," as James called it.

There are differing reactions to the varied conceptions of the self and the widely differing usage of the same term that often means something very different when used within specific theoretical frameworks or in different contexts. Some find this cacophony confusing and write the self off in desperation. Others gather in distinct groups, such as the Meadian scholars and the ego-psychoanalysts, adding to psychology's disunity. Some ambitious ones like Gordon Allport try to propose new terms with the hope of developing common understanding. But meanings cannot be legislated, and new perspectives keep on emerging, and scholars use the same old terms with different definitions or to add a twist to the argument. Often in conversations where persons steeped in differing approaches get together, misunderstandings occur, and sometimes scholars keep talking past one another. What to do to avoid misunderstandings and talking past one another? I do not think there is a quick fix. What I would prefer to do is to specify whenever appropriate whether the self is being used in a Jamesian, Meadian, or a Jungian sense, so as to try avoid certain common confusions.

Before closing this section, I would like to return for a moment to the definition of the self as "knower, thinker, feeler, and doer—all in one blended unit of a sort that guarantees the continuance of all becoming," which, as noted earlier, Gordon Allport (1955) attributed to P. A. Bertocci (1945). This definition stands out against definitions that emphasize only the affective or the cognitive or some other specific aspect of personhood. It tries to cover most of the territory of personhood, unlike many others that focus on some part or other of the whole person. Interestingly, this definition of the self is an almost exact translation of the Upsaniṣadic view of the person as one who knows, feels, and acts (*jñātā*, *bhoktā*, *kartā*). Given the centuries and continents that separate Bertocci and Allport from the ancient Indian Upaniṣads, the similarity between them is very remarkable. Indeed, I find it strong and promising enough to serve as a conceptual bridge between the psychologies of India and the West, and this volume is an attempt to build such a bridge. Regardless of such confidence in the degree of similarity between these definitions of selfhood, I wish to point out an important difference between Bertocci's and the Advaita Vedāntic views of personhood and selfhood.

As Bertocci indicates, his emphasis is on portraying the self as something that blends varied and continually changing thoughts, feelings, and actions into a unit of a sort that ensures continuance and Becoming, i.e., continual changes in personhood. By sharp contrast, the Advaita Vedāntists suggest that cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects of personhood cannot adequately account for the unity in the multiplicity of selves or for the sameness underlying the changes. They postulate a transcendental Self to account for the Being behind the Becoming, a center of experience beyond the person as one who knows, feels, and acts (Paranjpe, 1987). This issue of what accounts for the unity in multiplicity and for sameness despite change in persons is widely known as the problem of identity, to which we now turn.

Identity

Persons are not static entities. As biological organisms persons must grow and adapt to a continually changing environment. The bodily Me matures over years, grows into adulthood, deteriorates in old age, and eventually stops functioning. There are corresponding psychological changes. For instance, cognitive capacities and various urges get stronger with bodily growth, use, and socialization, bringing ever new horizons, new hopes, and fears. As social beings we must adapt to the constantly evolving social organizations and their norms that undergo historical changes. As such, the Jamesian social Me must evolve as well; new roles are added, ways of playing them are reviewed, new friendships develop, some old ones deteriorate, and so on. The Jamesian spiritual Me undergoes corresponding changes as well. Over the decades, a lot of changes take place, and it is difficult to find a single aspect of the person that remains the same. There are of course factors that bring stability in the sea of change: career and marriage, lasting friendships, commitment to an ideology and core values—all of these tend to provide stability as well as meaning to many lives. Nonetheless, none of these factors can be guaranteed to last forever and provide an unbreakable backbone for selfsameness. Some of the most intimate relationships sour after decades; friends leave; spouses drift, divorce, or die; careers are threatened by economic and technological changes; some persons undergo religious or ideological conversions; and sometimes situations arise where one's most highly cherished values have to be abandoned. In some instances, inner or outer changes arising from illnesses, unemployment, natural disasters, social revolutions, and the like are so strong as to threaten or even break the strongest and the most stable of selves. In many societies around the world today, an increasing number of marriages end up in divorce, and radical technological change and economic globalization have made the idea of lifelong careers a thing of the past. Indeed, *what*, if anything, remains the *same* in face of diverse and major changes through the life cycle is a vexing question that has not yet been answered to everyone's satisfaction.

Yet, on the other hand, most people have an unmistakable sense of having been the same persons throughout their lives. This is probably as true in today's rapidly changing world as it was in putatively stable times of the past. Today's old man would probably be as convinced of being the same little boy he was 70 years ago as William James was in his old age a century ago. Most of us, for the most part, are able to develop and maintain a sense of continuity and sameness throughout our lives, despite various types of discontinuities and deep and diverse changes through decades of the life cycle. There are of course some exceptions to this general rule; there are occasional cases of amnesic fugue where people forget who they are and might even start a new life as someone else, but such cases are very rare (Ables & Schilder, 1935; Crabtree, 1985, pp. 36–38; Braude, 1995).

At any rate, to say that a person, or anything, for that matter, has changed and yet remained the same is a *paradox*, for sameness and change are opposites of each other, and two opposite statements cannot be true at the same time. This conundrum has been called the "paradox of identity," and a whole set of issues connected with it has been labeled the "problem of identity." William James (1890/1983) was convinced that personal identity had been "justly regarded as the most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal" (p. 314). He devoted a significant portion of his chapter on the self to discuss the various solutions suggested from Descartes onward to help solve this puzzle. After critically reviewing the positions of major Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinkers on the problem of identity, William James thought that the problem was "metaphysical," and left it to the philosophers to deal with. During the century that has since passed, psychologists have followed James's advice and have stopped being bothered by the problem of identity. Erik Erikson is a prominent exception to the psychologists' apathy in this regard. In the meantime, some philosophers have continued to struggle with the problem, but a wide gap has developed between the philosophical and psychological perspectives on identity. In Chapter 3, I shall present an outline of Erik Erikson's perspective on identity. Here, I wish to discuss some historical developments in thinking about identity, since despite their relevance to psychology, they are generally missed because of contemporary psychologists' divorce from both history and philosophy. During the course of this discussion, I wish to clarify certain issues that are in my view necessary to help make the connection with the typical Indian approaches to the problem of identity.

Perspectives on the Problem of Identity: Historical Background

When John Locke articulated the concept of person, he made it quite clear that the issue of personal identity was inextricably connected with the notion of personhood. This connection follows directly from the forensic implications of the notion of personhood, for in the judicial context, it is imperative for the court to ensure that the person being accused, convicted, and sentenced is the same as the one whom reliable witnesses saw committing the alleged crime, and not someone

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else. A mistaken identity would certainly mean a miscarriage of justice. Our conception of justice is founded on the assumption that one and the same person resides in a body throughout the life cycle. There would obviously be a problem if many different personalities were to be in charge of a body at different times, as it seems to happen in the rare but not too uncommon cases of multiple personality. Assuming that Dr. Jekyll commits a crime and is imprisoned, it would not be fair to keep his body in prison when Mr. Hyde is in charge of it. Locke (1690/1959) probably did not know about multiple personalities, but he discussed its implications by imagining that it would be "possible for the same man to have distinct incommunicable consciousness at different times" (Vol. 1, p. 461).

Locke also recognized that continued existence of the same person in the same body was a precondition for a just ascription of rights and duties, and that a complete change in personhood would pose a problem. He raised this issue by means of a parable in which a prince's soul enters a cobbler's body (1690/1959, Vol. 1, p. 457). This parable presents a purely imaginary scenario, but what was purely imaginary in Locke's time has become fairly plausible owing to advances in medical technology. A few years prior to Dr. Christian Barnard's first successful heart transplant in 1967, the philosopher Sydney Shoemaker (1963) imagined a scenario in which two persons' brains are surgically transposed. The purpose of this thought experiment is to discuss the problem of personal identity following the lead of Locke's parable of the prince and the cobbler. Imagine that such a transplant succeeds and A's brain survives with his memories in B's body, but A's body dies. In this scenario, problems are bound to arise in regard to who is dead and who is alive, and it will be difficult to decide whose insurer would have to pay for the settlement of claims and whose survivors would be the beneficiaries. For the time being let us set aside the suggested solutions to this complicated issue and simply note that the problem of identity is inevitably and inextricably connected with the issue of ownership, privileges, and liabilities of persons.

Although Locke was arguably the first one in the history of Western thought to articulate the connection between the idea of personhood and the problem of identity, he was not the first one to either recognize the connection between them or to suggest a solution. A case in point is Descartes's notion of the soul as an indivisible substance that survives the body's death. Although the idea of the survival of the soul till the Day of Judgment was prompted by Descartes's Catholic background, for him it was not simply a theological baggage to carry. For Descartes, as for many others, it was important to think that justice must ultimately be done. Since the body is clearly perishable, and since many persons do not get what is rightfully due them during their lifetime, it seemed necessary for Descartes to postulate that the soul, which putatively enjoys and suffers as a consequence of its good and bad deeds, must be assumed to survive until the day when God would set the record straight for every soul that ever lived. Like Descartes, Locke too was interested to see that justice is done, but as a practical man concerned with civic matters in a world tormented by religious dogma, Locke was concerned more with

justice here on earth than in the other world. Descartes, following the traditional distinction between the notions of *substance* and *attribute*, viewed thoughts as continually changing attributes that inhere or reside in an unchanging substrate or a substance called the soul. The idea here is that the soul-substance remains the same while thoughts change, just as the substance we call water remains unchanged despite changing from a fluid to a gaseous vapor or solid ice. Locke rejected the Cartesian explanation of personal identity in terms of the identity of substance, and preferred to account for it in terms of the identity of consciousness and in the mind's capacity to retain impressions of past events in memory.

During the course of the history of Western thought, both the Cartesian and Lockean ways of accounting for personal identity have been challenged and rejected by many thinkers. The Cartesian doctrine of two different kinds of substances was criticized by Hobbes in his own time, and it has been in an endless controversy ever since. William James has offered by far the most devastating criticism of Descartes's substantialist solution to the problem of identity. James pointed out the "merely verbal character" (1890/1983, p. 329) of the notion or substance, for the Cartesian notion of the soul is nothing more than a mere label attached to what can never be verified by direct observation or any other means. A definitive critique of Locke's view of memories as the basis for personal identity was suggested early in the 18th century by Joseph Butler (1736/1975), who pointed out that "consciousness of identity *presupposes*, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity" (p. 100, emphasis added). The argument here is that it is implicit in the very notion we call remembering that a certain idea occurs again to the *same* person who had experienced it sometime before. What Butler was pointing out was the logical priority of the notion of identity over that of memory. It is interesting to note in this connection that some Indian thinkers were clearly aware of the logical priority of personal identity over the notion of memory centuries prior to Butler. For instance, Bādarāyaṇa, who composed his Vedānta aphorisms[15] probably in the second century of the Common Era, counters the Buddhist thesis of the momentariness of selfhood by suggesting that the fact that we remember *proves* the nonmomentariness, or continued existence, of the Self.

It is my impression that after Locke, Western thinking about personal identity developed in different directions; two rather distinct approaches are illustrated in the ideas of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) and David Hume (1711–1776). Reid (1785/1975b) rejected Locke's notion that personal identity is explained by the identity of consciousness. His argument was that insofar as

> [c]onsciousness, and every kind of thought, are transient and momentary, and have no continued existence, it would certainly follow, that no man is the same person two moments of his life; and as the right and justice of reward and punishment are founded on personal identity, no man could be responsible for his actions. (pp. 116–117)

Such an amoral conclusion was unacceptable to Reid. "If you ask a definition of identity, I confess I can give none," said Reid (1785/1975a), "it is too simple a

notion to admit of such a definition" (p. 108). Like Butler, who had said earlier that the idea of personal identity is *presupposed* in the concept of memory, Reid said that "... personal identity ... *implies* the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call myself" (p. 109; emphasis altered).

Reid's idea that personal identity is a simple notion that cannot be further explained, but must be presupposed, is echoed in recent times in the work of the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and P. F. Strawson. Wittgenstein's main point was that in the ordinary language, the word *person* and such expressions as the *same person* are used to refer to most people who have continuous memories of past events rather than, say, memories of only odd days on odd days and of even days on even days. If we did meet people with split personalities who alternate on even and odd days, we would perhaps devise expressions to suit such cases, but we do not. To put it differently, continuity and selfsameness in persons is common enough, so we can take it for granted (see Wittgenstein, 1958, pp. 61–62). In trying to explain the notions of the pure ego, person, and personal identity, Strawson (1959/1963) uses the expressions "logically primitive" (p. 98) and "logically prior" (p. 99). Strawson seems to use the term "primitive" in the Wittgensteinian sense. According to Wittgenstein (1945–1948/1970), a "primitive" concept is *prelinguistic* in the sense that "a language game is based *on it*, that it is the prototype way of thinking and not the result of thought" (p. 95e; emphasis original). Looked at in this sense, we need not *explain* the concept of identity in terms of the sameness of substance, composition, nature, properties, essence, or in other such ways; the problem of identity is not a genuine problem; it is a pseudoproblem arising from the language game we have invented. This way of dealing with the problem of identity is a classic instance of the Wittgensteinian way of "dissolving" a problem by showing that the so-called problem is an artifact of linguistic usage. In my view, although it is reasonable to accept that selfsameness in persons is *assumed*, it cannot be dismissed as a pseudoproblem, for, as I hope to show later on, the questions like "What remains same in me?" or "What can I afford to change in my self?" raise profoundly *existential* issues that cannot be ignored as minor irritants arising from imperfections of language.

Writing decades before Reid, Hume approached the issue of personal identity quite differently. Instead of taking it as a presupposition necessary to understand phenomena such as memory, as Butler had suggested before him, Hume tried to tackle the problem of identity in a couple of different ways: first, by trying to explain it with the use of an analogy of the identity of a ship, and second, by looking for empirical evidence for the self's continued existence. Let us examine these Humean approaches. Regarding explanation by analogy, Hume (1739/1978) said: "A ship, of which a considerable part has been chang'd by frequent reparations, is still considered as the same"; similarly, an "infant becomes a man, and is sometimes fat, and sometimes lean, without any change in his identity" (p. 257). What is implied here is that, according to Hume, what we *mean* when we refer to

"a ship" is a vessel to carry one across a river or a lake; the *essence* of a ship lies in its function, not in the parts that make this function possible. Since the changes of parts do not affect the continuation of this function and its usefulness to us, the changes can be safely ignored. By analogy, the change in the weight, organs, or physical composition of the body or change in the contents of the mind do not matter. But such reasoning does not adequately answer what is of essence in persons, nor does it tell us what, if anything, remains unchanged in persons. Hume's other strategy to help solve the problem of identity is to actually peep into the mind and see if there is something in it (perhaps the so-called self) that remains the same. After searching for a self in his own mind, Hume found nothing that remained unchanged, and declared that no such thing as the self existed. Hume's denial of the self had many deep implications that invited a strong, dialectical response from Kant. The dialectics of the Humean denial of the self and Kant's affirmation of the same is an important chapter of Enlightenment thought that is particularly relevant for the present discussion for two reasons: First, as I will try to show, the Humean denial and the Kantian affirmation of the self and identity are two radically different approaches that are not mere historical curiosities, but have followers in contemporary psychology. Second, their mutual opposition is paralleled by the Buddhist denial and the Upaniṣadic affirmation of the self. As such, the Humean and Kantian views deserve to be discussed in some detail. But before turning to such a discussion, it would be useful to explain different and often mutually contradictory meanings that the terms *self* and *identity* have acquired over the years, so it will be easier to understand what is being affirmed and what is being rejected in the name of a self.

The Different Meanings of the Terms *Self* and *Identity*

We have already surveyed the different ways in which the terms *self* and *ego* have been defined by major 20th-century thinkers such as James, Mead, Cooley, and Freud. Following James's notion of the self, with a lower case "s," the term *self* is sometimes used to designate one of the many "selves," such as bodily self or one's occupation self, and so on. Sometimes, however, the term *self* is understood as the Jamesian Self, with a capital "S," meaning something that accounts for a unity of the many social roles we play, or an abiding selfsameness underlying our changing roles and social identities. Ironically, one comes across a similar mutually contradictory usage of the term *identity*. While in common language we use expressions such as one's national or professional identity, which imply the many different and changeable self-definitions, we also use the term *identity* to designate personal identity, the principle that ostensibly accounts for the unity and sameness of a person across time and space. In teaching undergraduate classes in North America, I have often heard students complaining about the confusion caused by such ambiguous usage of the terms. There is no simple solution to this problem;

people not only tend to misunderstand words, they are also free to redefine terms as they see fit. Again, we need to remember that meanings of lexical items cannot be legislated; lexicographers simply describe the terms as commonly used, often adding new definitions to the already existing repertoire as new usages become established. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) lists many different meanings of the term *identity* that are currently in vogue. Of these, I would like to point out the following three, since they refer to different aspects of the problem of identity:

1. The quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness.
2. The condition or fact that a person or a thing is itself and not something else.
3. The condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc.

The *first* set of meanings clearly refers to the philosophical implications of the problem of identity. It involves the concepts of substance, essence, and others, which several philosophers have discussed in detail over the centuries. In the foregoing discussion we have seen how Descartes proposed the concept of mental substance as a way of solving the problem of identity, and we also noted James's criticism of the substantialist position. I will return to some of the implications of the Cartesian dualism later on in connection with the concepts of self-as-agent and other relevant points. I also will discuss the conceptions of identity as absolute sameness and oneness in the context of the Kantian and Advaita Vedāntic approaches to the problem of identity. As I will attempt to show, the meaning of identity as absolute sameness and unity does not imply some arcane and obtuse issue fit for the arid zone of logical acrobatics and linguistic hairsplitting, but refers instead to some deeply existential aspects of the problem of identity.

The *second* meaning of identity, namely, "the condition or fact that a person or a thing is itself and not something else," is at the heart of the forensic conception of personhood. In the forensic or judicial context, such as a police lineup or in giving testimony in a court, witnesses help establish the identity of the accused by *confirming* that the accused person is the same as the one who was witnessed while committing the alleged offense and not someone else. There are a number of factors leading to unreliable testimony: inaccuracies in perception and memory, confusion arising from similarities between the accused and others at the scene of the crime or in the police lineup, the witness's conscious or unconscious desire to see or project the accused in a positive or negative light, and so on. Psychologists are often called on to testify in court proceedings as experts on such psychological matters as inaccuracies in perception, memory, and so on. But generally we do not hear of any philosopher's being asked to testify on matters of logic or being consulted on the validity of the essentialist or other definitions of the concept of identity, and so on, because the *concept* of identity is hardly ever questioned.

Nobody thinks that the criminal may have suddenly metamorphosed into someone else; the identities (in the sense of the continued existence) of the accused, witnesses, prosecutors, as well as defense lawyers and expert witnesses are *presumed*. In the usual affairs of daily life, the continued existence and selfsameness of persons are taken for granted, or are *axiomatic*; it does not need or deserve philosophic analysis or contemplation. It is in this Wittgensteinian "primitive" sense of the word that the term *identity* is used in reference to a variety of identity papers such as the driver's license, passport, library card, or various other types of "photo ID." The purpose of such papers is to establish the presenter's ownership of a certain piece of property, his or her eligibility to drive a car, or the right to cross an international border, or the privilege to borrow a book, and so on. In other words, the meaning of the term *identity* in the variety of papers involves a variety of civic rights and privileges associated with personhood. Erikson has coined the term "paper identity" to refer to this meaning of identity.

The third meaning of identity, as "the condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc.," is rare according to the OED. But in my view, this usage is quite common, particularly in psychology. This meaning is implied, for instance, when someone speaks of one's "Canadian identity" or "my identity as professor." Such usage suggests that the speaker feels identified with a certain nationality, vocation, or other aspect of her or his social existence. When we are asked, "Who are you?" the answers we tend to give are different depending on the situation and the context. Thus, if asked "Who are you?" in a college, a person might say "I am a professor," but in his son's school he would say I am Bobby's father; in a hobby shop, "I am a stamp collector"; and in a psychology discussion group, the correct answer might be "I am an extrovert." In such matters, a person's so-called identity is clearly *changeable* from one situation to another. Moreover, our identifications with social roles, hobbies, personal traits, and such are changeable through the course of life history. It is not uncommon for people to change their nationality, ideology, vocation, close friends, spouse, family, lifestyle, and so on without ever doubting that they are one and the same self they have always been. In general, the term *identity* is often used in a social context to designate that with which a person identifies him- or herself in particular situations during given periods of time—a group membership, an ideology, a religion, or with some "location" on the social map, to put it in the words of Peter Berger (1966a). As we shall see in the next chapter, Erikson deals with identity primarily in this sense, and calls it the *psychosocial* identity of persons.

It should be clear from the foregoing discussion that the term *identity* is used to refer to widely varied meanings, all associated with different aspects of personhood. The central issue is concerned with reconciling of the polarities of unity *versus* diversity, and sameness *versus* change in regard to personhood. In the West, as in the Indian tradition, the question of what if anything remains the same in personhood has been tied closely with the concept of self, insofar as self was

often the term used to refer to the principle of unity and sameness in persons. Before we turn to the discussion of these issues, we may ask: Why should anyone bother with this set of problems? To whom and how would they matter?

The Problem of Identity: How Does It Matter?

The most common usage of the term *identity* that we come across almost daily is in regard to identity papers. As noted, the purpose of identity papers is to certify and thereby protect a person's rights or privileges of one sort or another. Given that in such matters, it is assumed that every person continue to be one and the same person, the questions of what if anything remains unchanged in them seems irrelevant. If so, why should anyone worry about what remains the same in persons?

Indeed, most people, for the most part, are not bothered about what accounts for their continued sameness or identity. That most people can afford to ignore the problem of identity does not mean either that it is solved or that it has been ignored. It has indeed proved to be one of the most puzzling puzzles of all times, and personal identity continues to be a very active area of research in contemporary philosophy (see Vesey, 1974; Rorty, 1976; Hirsch, 1982; Shoemaker & Swinburne, 1984; Noonan, 1989; Harris, 1995). In keeping with the analytical approach typical of modern Anglo-American philosophy, numerous contemporary philosophers have been engaged in solving the problem of identity using the logical analysis of complex, usually imaginary, scenarios. As noted in the previous chapter, many contemporary philosophers have concocted a variety of imaginary situations involving brain bisection and transplants to help address various aspects of the puzzle of personal identity (see, for example, papers by Bernard Williams, Derek Parfit, and Thomas Nagel, in Perry, 1975). Although the imaginary scenarios might help throw some light on logical and ethical issues associated with the problem of identity, Wilkes (1988) is perhaps right in suggesting that on the whole they divert attention from problems of "real people." But if most "real" people can and do happily go about their daily life as if the problem did not even exist, for whom and in what way is the problem of identity relevant and important?

Personal identity is a nonissue as long as things keep moving smoothly in an average expectable environment, but it has the potential to be problematic for almost everybody under certain circumstances. It is somewhat like the transportation system that is taken for granted as long as it works smoothly, but becomes a huge problem in case of an accident, a workers' strike, or other such situations. Although very few people split into multiple personalities, all of us must play multiple roles every day and keep the multiple selves united into a single whole, and occasionally face role conflicts that have a potential to split us apart. Nobody can stop changing; all of us must cope with change and maintain a sense of selfsameness. All of us risk a breakdown, as some individuals do in the face of

sudden and radical shifts in the environment during calamitous crises. In general, the degree of difficulty in the development and maintenance of unity and sameness increases in proportion to the range or diversity of internal differentiation and the degree and rate of change that an individual faces. Coping with inner diversity and change is a matter appropriate for psychological study, even as trying to solve the paradox of identity is a task fit for philosophical inquiry.

Erik Erikson's essay, "The Problem of Ego-Identity," first published in 1956, is an important landmark in the psychological study of the problem of identity. We will look closely at Erikson's views on this matter in the next chapter. What makes it psychological is that it deals with the various internal and societal factors that induce changes in persons through the life cycle and their trials and tribulations in coping with the changes and in developing and maintaining a sense of selfsameness in face of the changes. According to Erikson, "identity crises," i.e., periods in which some individuals experience difficulties in the development and maintenance of a sense of selfsameness, occur predominantly during late adolescence and early adulthood. This should not be surprising against the foregoing discussion, because adolescence is a period marked by major and rapid internal changes induced by puberty, which also coincides with major changes demanded by social expectations of transition from childhood to adulthood. Rapid and major historical and social changes add to the biologically induced difficulties of transition to adulthood and exacerbate a youth's difficulties in maintaining a sense of selfsameness. Also, complex societies that offer their youth opportunities to choose from a much wider variety of occupations, ideologies, and lifestyles than less complex societies do, thereby make it more difficult to find a suitable place in society and to integrate the diverse roles and ideals into a meaningful and unified sense of self. Given the increased rate of social and technological change and increasing acculturation of diverse cultures in the process of globalization, an increasing number of people are facing greater difficulties in developing a sense of identity than ever before. It is possible that the sociocultural climate in the so-called postmodern era might alleviate the situation somewhat by tempering expectations of consistency and stability from individuals. These types of issues are just beginning to be raised; they are among the challenges that contemporary researchers must face in the near future.

It is necessary to clarify a simple but important implication of identity in the sense that it implies "the condition of being identified in feeling, interest, etc.," to something or other. If one adopts a strictly determinist position, one assumes that what a person identifies with is determined by factors beyond individual control, whether the factors be of social, biological, environmental, or psychological nature. We shall discuss the issue of freedom versus determinism in Chapter 6. Assuming for a moment that individuals *can* choose among at least a small range of alternative persons, groups, ideals, and ideologies with which to identify, the choice matters a lot. Choosing to be a dancer rather than a geologist, a Catholic and

not a Communist, nor a provincialist as opposed to an internationalist makes consideable difference to not only the identity of the chooser, but also to others. Identification of the individual with other persons, groups, ideas, ideals, and so on is a matter of investing one's affect, of love, concern, indifference, or hatred. Here we may remember William James's idea quoted earlier in this chapter that love, whether self-love or love for objects, is "liable to be taken up or dropped at will." Moreover, as several schools of Indian thought suggest, it is possible for individuals to intensify the investment of affect in objects of love if they choose and/or to cultivate affective neutrality. We will discuss the strategies suggested for such modification of affect in Chapter 5. If indeed such strategies are effective, it may be possible for persons to modify their psychosocial identities to a great extent.

Finally, "Who am I?" is the most significant issue, with profound existential implications for a person. In principle, there may be an unlimited variety of ways in which one could construe, define, and shape one's own self; at one extreme one could commit suicide or hurt oneself in a variety of ways, and at the other extremes one could work toward some form or other of gratification, fulfillment, self-actualization, self-realization, liberation, or some such ideal. Moreover, one could conceivably choose between changing oneself toward some form of betterment or trying to discover some unchangeable state. In the history of the Western tradition, Heraclitus and Parminides are known to have offered two rival models, the first advocating perpetual change while the latter preferred stasis of changelessness. Similarly, in the Indian tradition, Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta offered alternative models, one emphasizing Becoming or change and the other Being and permanence. It will be useful to explore these alternatives and see how they view the problem of identity.

The Denial and Affirmation of the Self in India and the West

I have discussed this issue elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1995b, in press) at greater length. Here, I am restricting the discussion to fit the scope of this chapter. To that end, I shall first focus on the denial and affirmation of the self by Hume and Kant, respectively. After outlining their contrasting positions, I will try to show how their approaches are echoed in contemporary psychology in the views of Skinner and Erikson, respectively. Although neither Skinner nor Erikson explicitly discuss their views in light of Humean or Kantian positions, they seem nevertheless to be selectively influenced by these intellectual forebears. Following this discussion, I wish to compare the Hume–Kant dialectic with that of Buddhism–Vedānta. To help clarify the issues involved in comparing such contrasting views across the cultural gaps that stand between them, it is necessary to sharpen the questions one might ask in this context. The questions may be framed as follows:

1. *What* is it that is either affirmed or denied in the name of the self?
2. What are the *grounds* on which the validity of propositions is claimed?
3. What are the *interests*, *values*, and *goals* that may have guided a given inquiry in a certain direction, and what are the practical *consequences* that follow from their respective conclusions?

It should be easy to see that these questions follow the typical trilogy of ontology, epistemology, and axiology common in Western philosophy. Although such a tripartite division is not common in Indian thought, I think it is not unreasonable to apply it to the Indian context.

The Historical Origins of the Dialectics of the Self in Western Thought

St. Augustine's quip, "For if I am deceived, so I am," is arguably one of the oldest statements affirming the existence of the self in Western thought. It was sometime during the early 5th century CE that St. Augustine said this, in his *City of God* (1950, xi, 26, p. 370), in response to the Academicians, i.e., Plato's followers of his time, who were challenging him about the validity of his claims to the existence of a soul or the self. Augustine's defense against their doubts was that no doubts could ever be expressed unless there exists a doubter in the first place. In the 17th century, Descartes invoked the same line of argument in defense of the self while combating his own radical doubt against assumptions of all kinds. Descartes's famous words, "I think, therefore I am," are recognized as a sign of his "rationalist" approach, since the grounds of this affirmation reside in the implicit argument that if we admit that thinking of some sort is going on, then it is absurd to deny the existence of the thinker.

During Europe's Age of Enlightenment, Descartes's views provided the background for the debates over a number of issues between the Continental Rationalists such as Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant, on the one hand, and the British Empiricists such as Bacon, Locke, and Hume, on the other. The basic bone of contention during the course of these debates was the origin, nature, and validation of *knowledge*. As to the nature of the existence of the self, David Hume emerged as the strongest nay-sayer, instigating an equally strong response from Immanuel Kant. To understand the grounds of Hume's rejection of the self, we need to look into the principles of the empiricist epistemology handed down by his intellectual forebears, Bacon and Locke. As noted in the previous chapter, these include the metaphor of the mind as a mirror and the notion of knowledge as primarily an image of an object in this mirror. It may be recalled that Hume found no support for the concept of cause for want of any mental images of what might be seen as "causes" in the real world. Hume's conclusions in this matter undermined the

faith in Newtonian science, which was about to become the cornerstone of Western thought. The impact of Hume's skepticism went much farther than shaking up the foundations of natural science; it undermined ethics as well, since, if causality and necessity are denied, intentions could not be guaranteed to bring about relevant actions anymore than natural causes could be counted on to bring about relevant effects. And where would intentions emanate from except the mind, and who would prompt them other than the self? Given his tacit acceptance of the Cartesian dualism, Hume expected the self to be ensconced somewhere *in* the mind rather than *out* there in the world. But given his commitment to empiricism, Hume could validate the existence of the self on the basis of some kind of an experience of it, and not on the basis of an argument like the one Descartes had suggested. Against this background, Hume, a tireless inquirer, set out to "look" for a self in the contents of his own mind.

Hume's Denial of the Self

The results of Hume's introspective explorations are well known; he affirmed not only for himself but for "the rest of mankind" that the mind was "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions" (1739/1978, p. 252); there is nothing to unite the perceptions and provide a sense of sameness throughout life. Contemporary psychologists may be expected to be reasonably familiar with Hume's views, since William James quotes them extensively in his famous chapter on the self. However, there is not much discussion in contemporary psychology of the Humean position of the self, not even in textbooks of the history of psychology. Psychologists seem to think of it as a dead issue; many behaviorists apparently accept Hume's conclusions, while the self-theorists ignore them. At any rate, in my view there are some important implications of Hume's way of "looking" into the mind in search of the self that are worth considering. First, this looking implied that what was to be discovered had to be an *object* to be observed, something like a flower or a billiard ball, as it were. Like other objects in nature, this object was expected to cast an "impression," or an accurate reflection, in the mind's mirror. Second, Hume's approach, like that of his predecessor Locke, was molecularistic; knowledge was assumed to originate from elemental mental images or "ideas," and complex ideas representing complex objects were assumed to be matchingly complex compounds of simple ideas. Here are Hume's words from his famous passage on personal identity:

> But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, thro' the whole course of our lives; since self is suppos'd to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. (1739/1978, p. 251)

It is obvious from Hume's words that he was indeed "looking" for something that is *invariable* throughout the lifetime of a person, and such a thing, he thought, must be an object to be known through its equally invariable, if perhaps also matchingly complex, mental image. What a set of assumptions. How could one expect to obtain in one's mind a sensory image—a *picture*—of a self or a person that never changes? Even James, who quotes the above words, misses the point that Hume had looked for, at best, the self-as-object. It is ironic that James, who goes to great lengths in making the distinction between self-as-subject as well as the self-as-object, ignores that Hume's search was wrongheaded from the very start, in that it completely ignores the possibilities and prospects for the self-as-subject. The self-as-subject is, by definition, not an object to be seen, heard, or touched, but rather is the experiencer of sights and sounds that is not itself seen, heard, or touched. Moreover, insofar as Hume was aiming at the self-as-object, how could he expect the bodily Me, the social Me, or the spiritual Me (meaning the ideas and other contents of the mind) to cast a fixed image in the mind, since all of them keep continually changing throughout life? Although James missed this point, his overall assessment of Hume's work, namely, that Hume's "Associationist Theory" fails to account for the unity of the mind, is nevertheless correct. So much for the Humean search for the self, which was (mis)guided by an epistemology based on the mirror metaphor.

At any rate, what was the result following from the conclusion of Hume's inquiry? Given that Hume's skepticism had undermined the project of science, as well as that of ethics, his introspective inquiry added a serious doubt about the existence of his own self. Hume took the implications of his doctrines seriously, and the effect on his emotional state was disastrous. In his concluding remarks, Hume said:

> Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, inviron'd with the deepest darkness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of every member and faculty. (Hume, 1739/1978, p. 269)

Thoroughly disgusted with the state to which the empiricist denial of the self had taken him, Hume said: "... I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and resolve never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy" (p.269). This was a personal sentimental ending of a remarkably cold and impersonal inquiry into the self. Indeed, Hume gave up philosophy in actual life and turned to something "interesting" instead. Remarks Conze (1963b): "... appalled by his own nihilism, [Hume] turned away from philosophy and occupied himself with re-writing the history of England in the interest of the Tory Party" (p. 114). Such reference to the personal life of an author

would appear to be an *ad hominem* kind of remark that is shunned in the atmosphere of cultivated impersonality in contemporary philosophical and scientific discourse. Then again, it is interesting to ask: When the self itself is the object of inquiry, could (or should) an inquirer remain completely unaffected by the implications of his conclusions for his own self? As is well known, Kant was so disturbed by reading Hume, that he set out to bring order to the worlds of science, ethics, and the self that Hume's conclusions had undermined. Before turning to Kant though, let us take a took at Skinner, who is as emphatic in the denial of the self in our times as Hume was in his.

B. F. Skinner: An Intellectual Successor to Bacon and Hume

In considering Skinner to be an intellectual successor to Hume, I do not wish to suggest either that Skinner's model is directly derived from Hume's or that it is a replica of the Humean model. Indeed, there are basic differences between Hume's and Skinner's views of what it means to "know" anything; for Skinner (1974), knowing involved forming "rules for action" (p. 139) in relating to the world and was not a matter of having images in the mind. Nevertheless, various kinds of difficulties in obtaining valid knowledge of the "self" provided the basis for Humean as well as Skinnerian denials of the self. Skinner (1974) complained, for instance, that knowledge of the supposed "inner causes of behavior"—attitudes, traits, or a self—was "entirely inferential" (p. 159). There are of course other, additional grounds for Skinner's denial of the self, especially the agentic self. In *About Behaviorism*, Skinner (1974) flatly declares that "[t]here is no place in the scientific position for a self as a true originator or initiator of action" (p. 225). In rejecting the mind and accepting a physicalist ontology and in accepting a mechanistic view of human action, Skinner reflects the views of Thomas Hobbes, which we shall examine in Chapter 6. At any rate, Skinner's response to the denial of the self was considerably different from that of Hume. To understand why, it would be useful once again to review the history of ideas that shaped his perspective. Skinner's own writings provide clues in this regard.

In his autobiography, Skinner (1983) notes how he had become "thoroughly Baconian" (p. 406) after reading Farrington's (1964) *Philosophy of Bacon*, and identifies three Baconian principles that he followed most closely: (1) Bacon's insistence on studying nature, not books; (2) the Baconian dictum, "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed;" and (3) Bacon's utopianism, whereby Skinner's *Walden Two* is directly inspired by Bacon's *New Atlantis* (see Skinner, 1983, pp. 406–413). In *About Behaviorism*, Skinner (1974) clarifies how he followed Bacon in viewing knowledge as *power*:

> We do not act by putting knowledge to use; our knowledge *is* action, or at least rules for action. As such it is power, as Francis Bacon pointed out in rejecting scholasticism and its emphasis on knowing for the sake of knowing.... The advancement ... of learning proposed by Bacon was the furthering of human behavior in the interest of the human condition, and the achievements of modern science show that he correctly foresaw its character. (p. 140).

Judged from Skinner's Baconian standards thus articulated, Hume would appear to be no successor to Bacon, but a throwback to the abominable scholastics guided by the sterile principle of "knowledge for its own sake." Skinner, however, is a true Baconian; his search for knowledge is guided by the benign and benevolent goal of the "improvement of the estate of man [*sic*]," as Bacon had put it. The value of improving the human condition guides Skinner's inquiry, although his commitment to value-free science seemed to prevent its expression in his scientific and technical writings. Skinner did express his values clearly, but their expression was sequestered from the scientific world and tucked away in his extracurricular writings. In the preface to the 1969 edition of his utopian novel, *Walden Two*, Skinner (1948/1969) says that his behavioral technology was to be used to create a society without quarreling, suspicion, jealousy, and competition and to promote mutual trust, love, and cooperation among people. These ideals are as sacred as motherhood, and I think hardly anybody would question him. Nor would anyone suspect Skinner's sincerity in pursuing them any more than Bacon's. But unlike Bacon, Skinner's focus is not so much on the control of Nature as on the control of human behavior in pursuit of an ideal society indicated in his *Walden Two*.

Control is one of the central themes of Skinnerian psychology that has generated a lot of controversy. If the Skinnerian technology of behavioral control is to be used for bringing about an ideal society as per design, then only those who understand the principles and goals of control would get to be controllers. But who would be the controllers and whose behavior would they control? Some critics had suspected that Skinner himself wished to be the controller—some kind of a benevolent dictator! In his autobiography, Skinner (1983, p. 321) has responded to all such suspicions and criticisms, and I see no reason to believe that Skinner had any dictatorial ambitions. Even if Skinner himself would not be the controller, would not some particular person(s) or group(s) have to be in the driving seat? In *About Behaviorism*, Skinner (1974, p. 206) suggests that it is a mistake to think that some particular individual—a compassionate therapist, industrialist, or scientist—would control everyone else. In his view, questions such as "*who* will control and to what *end*" are irrelevant or misdirected, because behavior is controlled not by "persons" but by a variety of contingencies of reinforcement, i.e., by food, words of praise, various aversive stimuli, and other such observable entities. Skinner's view of control is consistent with his denial of the concepts of self and personhood. For in his worldview, persons or agentic selves simply do not exist; observable entities or phenomena such as food or electric shocks do. Since there is no such thing as a self, the idea of self-control would be meaningless from the Skinnerian vantage point. Ironically, Skinner does not dismiss the concept of self-control; indeed, Skinner (1953) devotes an entire chapter of *Science and Human*

Behavior to this topic. Moreover, the psychologist Joe Kamiya (1972) has tried to show how Skinnerian operant techniques can be effective in establishing self-control over the electrical activity of the brain, thereby attaining the so-called "higher" states of consciousness. It is interesting that such applications of the techniques of behavior control are closer to Yoga, which implies a "psychology of the self," than to the Skinnerian model fashioned after Max Meyer's (1922) *Psychology of the Other-One.*

Skinner's denial of the self seems to follow the denial of the theological doctrine of the soul, which is accompanied by antireligious feelings, clearly and strongly expressed by Max Meyer, a fellow behaviorist whom Skinner quotes in an approving tone. Indeed, the antireligious attitudes that prevail in scientific circles are understandable against the backdrop of the inquisition of numerous pioneering scientists such as Vesalius and Galileo. Against this background, trying to relate Skinner's attitude toward control of behavior with the Baconian view of a God-given mandate would seem unreasonable. It is interesting, however, that Skinner himself has commented on the role of religious doctrines in shaping his views. In his autobiography, Skinner (1983) says: "Much of my scientific position seems to have begun as Presbyterian theology, not too far removed from the Congregational of Jonathan Edwards" (p. 403). These words, flowing from Skinner's own pen, are clearly relevant in understanding the meaning he attaches to the denial of the self.

It is important to note that in this context that Skinner (1983, pp. 402–403) explicitly recognized that his conception of a completely determined system of behavior is basically a reinterpretation of Jonathan Edwards's view of the doctrine of predestination. Skinner draws an important implication of a fully deterministic view of behavior: "Certainly it would be inconsistent to blame our sins on our genetic and environmental histories while continuing to claim credit for our achievements" (1983, p. 408). By the same token, it would be equally inconsistent to take credit for one's accomplishments and feel proud about them. Skinner took these ideas seriously and personally, as suggested by the following words:

> My analysis of the role of the individual in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* was so convincing that by the time I finished the book I actually did not feel that I had written it. I do not mean that I attributed it to some mystical "other one." There was no divine afflatus. My book was the inevitable consequence of what had happened to me and of what I had read. (1983, p. 409)

Notwithstanding Skinner's clearly secular stance, the surrender of will implied in the quote resonates with the theme of self-denial suggested by the popular expression "Thy will be done" in the Lord's Prayer, a common Christian prayer. In his autobiography, Skinner points out the parallel between his views of self-denial and those of the late medieval Christian author, Thomas à Kempis. Skinner puts it in the following words: "Assigning one's achievements to one's genetic and environmental histories is an act of self-denial that would have been understood by

Thomas à Kempis" (1983, p. 408). To put it in historical context, let me note Thomas à Kempis's views of self-denial expressed in his famous work, *The Imitation of Christ* (1470/1903). Following Matthew (16.24 and 19.21), Thomas à Kempis exhorts: "My son, thou canst not possess perfect liberty unless thou wholly renounce thyself ... Leave concupiscence and thou shall find rest" (1470/1903, pp. 168–169). Thomas à Kempis further exhorts us to stop pursuing self-interest and to give up covetousness, inquisitiveness, and gossiping. Skinner could not say all this under the banner of science, but he indicates close agreement with such views in his brief discussion of Thomas à Kempis's self-denial. Skinner explicitly recognizes that his denial of the self has many parallels in varied contexts: "The theme turns up," he says, "in mundane philosophy (e.g., Schopenhauer's annihilation of the will as the way to freedom) and literature (e.g., Conrad's Secret Sharer learning that true self-possession comes from self-abandonment). It is, of course, a strong theme in Eastern mysticism." (Skinner, 1983, p. 408).

Immanuel Kant's Affirmation of the Self

Immanuel Kant, who once said that he was awakened from his "dogmatic slumber" by the somber implications of Hume's conclusions, which had simultaneously undermined Newtonian physics on the one hand and the Protestant ethos on the other. Kant tried to do so by legitimizing the principle of causality in the sphere of science and by affirming autonomous agency and the concept of personhood within an ethical framework. True to the intellectual legacy of Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716) and Christian Wolff (1679–1754), Kant's approach was distinctly "rationalist." His attack on the Lockean model followed Leibniz's tack, who had responded to Locke's notion of the mind as a *tabula rasa* by saying that only a mind that is attentive and prepared can *know* something or other; a totally empty mind cannot accomplish anything (see Robinson, 1976, pp. 260–262). Knowing does not mean simply reflecting what is out there like in a passive mirror, but actively organizing the information received through the senses. Kant elaborated this notion of the *active* mind that must begin with something in it from the start by conceiving of a set of the categories of the understanding with which the human mind is putatively equipped from birth.

Rychlak (1981) likens this Kantian notion of the initial preparedness of the mind to a *preformatted* sheet as opposed to the Lockean metaphor of the mind as a *blank* sheet of paper, and represents the point of view built into the mind by way of this preparation by a pair of glasses one wears, as it were, while inspecting the sensory data. This view suggests a top-down model of the acquisition of knowledge, where one begins with abstract and general ideas, rather than necessarily and always beginning with concrete data. The main activity of the mind involves placing an observation in one of the preexisting (i.e., *a priori*) categories of the understanding—white–black, edible–nonedible, and so on—and by *comparing* it

with other bits of information, as more or less desirable, and so on. Throughout the period of time that may elapse from the moment the mind first notices some object, places it in, say, the "edible" category, and judges it as desirable enough to try eat immediately, the mind, as knower, must remain *one* and the *same* entity, or else it could not accomplish the task of knowing something and acting accordingly.

To help understand how so, let us imagine that, half way through the process of acquiring information and judging its nature, the mind or the self-as-knower suddenly splits itself into two or more separate entities or gets transformed into something else other than its starting nature. Then, in the case of a split from within, the different "parts" of the knower would have to somehow unite together and combine the bits of information acquired by different parts at different times or else break the process of knowing before its completion. And should the knower change to something else half way through the process, how could the new knower that has acquired only the later part of the information complete the process without the benefit of the information acquired by the earlier self? To put it simply, the unity and sameness of the self-as-knower are the *necessary conditions* for the very possibility of knowledge. If the mind were a mere bundle of ideas passively witnessing or mirroring the world by way of an unconnected series of ideas, as Hume thought it was, then the very possibility of knowledge would have to be denied. It is simply *absurd* to think of the self-as-knower in any terms other than unity and continued existence.

This *reductio ad absurdum* represents a typical Kantian maneuver. It supplies the second, *rationalist* pillar to the edifice of the Enlightenment project of Newtonian science at a time when its first, *empiricist* pillar started to shake as soon as Hume took Locke's bottom-up approach to its logical conclusion. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant (1781/1966) says:

> The reason why we postulate for every thought absolute unity of the subject is because otherwise we could not say of it, I think (the manifold in one representation). For although the whole of a thought may be divided and distributed under many subjects, the subjective I can never thus be divided and distributed. (p. 255)

Further, he adds, "Whatever is conscious of the numerical identity of its own self at different times, is ... a person" (p. 259). As can be easily seen, this line of argument leading to the postulation of the self-as-knower can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the self-as-agent. For it should be clear that a course of action would be impossible without the continued existence of some agency that would initiate a course of action and carry on until accomplishing its intended goal. Small wonder, then, that Kant speaks explicitly of the "*permanence* of the agent" (p. 163, emphasis original). It is widely believed that Kant's affirmation of the Pure Ego or the self-as-knower in the *Critique of Pure Reason* was indeed effective in restoring the confidence in Newtonian science. Similarly, with his affirmation of the "autonomy of the will as a supreme principle of morality" (p. 59), in the *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant (1785/1909) tried to uphold the ethical aspect of the Enlightenment project. Finally, in his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant (1790/1987) tried to explain the role of feelings in aesthetic as well as moral judgment. Thus, Kant affirmed the continued existence of Pure Ego and united the trilogy of mind, so as to demonstrate the logical viability of the concept of personhood along with the notion of personal identity.

Against this background, there should be no ambiguity as to *what* is affirmed by Kant by way of the Pure Ego and on what grounds. Kant (1781/1966) was explicit on the point that "[t]he identity of consciousness at different times is ... a *formal condition only* of my thoughts and their coherence, and proves in no way the numerical identity of my subject" (pp. 259–260; emphasis added). Kant was clear that his arguments proved the unity of thought only until that particular thought persisted, and in no way proved a lifelong unity and continuity of the subjective experience of the "I" that underlies the chain of thoughts. In fact, Kant adds in a footnote (1781/1966, p. 260) the metaphor of a series of discrete elastic balls representing each unitary pulse of cognition, such that each of these separate balls transmits the contents of its consciousness to the next. In such a case, although there would be a multiplicity of separate Jamesian Thoughts, the result would be the impression of the continued existence of the Thinker. Here, Kant's argument is qualitatively similar to Hume's metaphor of the boat, which keeps the continuity of its function despite the changes of parts under repair. Although such metaphors provide some understanding of how a sense of continuity might emerge through a succession of changing parts, it provided no proof for the numerical identity of an entity such as the boat or a person over a period of time. The fact that Kant repeatedly speaks of the "*logical* identity of the I" (1781/1966, p. 260) suggests that he implied "logical" in opposition to "factual." It should be clear from the above discussion that (1) what is affirmed by Kant as the Pure Ego is the continued existence of the self-as-knower as a necessary condition for the possibility of knowledge, and that (2) the only ground for its affirmation is logical postulation designed to escape the absurdity of its denial.

Against this background, we may consider James's criticism of the Kantian position: James's criticism is that (1) the Kantian "transcendental Ego" is not verifiable. This is correct because, as a mere logical postulate, the ego exists only in the logical space, so to speak; it has no place in the world of observation or experience. (2) As suggested by James, Kant's position is ambiguous, because on the one hand the Pure Ego is thought of as a condition for the possibility of knowledge, making it a (presumably passive) element in the equation that could not actively contribute to the process of knowing. On the other hand, the Pure Ego is also considered an agent, which must be actively engaged in the process of knowing and practically dealing with the world. How could something be both a passive condition and an active process at the same time? (3) As James (1890/1983) pointed out, "by Kant's confession, the transcendental Ego has no properties, and

from it nothing can be deduced.... The Ego is simply *nothing*: as ineffectual and windy an abortion as Philosophy can show" (pp. 344–345). In my view, this criticism is a bit too harsh; for if Kant's arguments were able to restore the strongly shaken faith in Newtonian science and Protestant morality in the Western world, they could not be worth nothing as James claimed. Yet, James is right to the extent that the Kantian postulation of the Pure Ego would make little difference in the life of most people; there could be no practical gains or existential benefits following from it.

Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson: Intellectual Successors to Kant

If one looks at the work of Piaget and Erikson against the backdrop of the intellectual history of the Western tradition, both of them might be seen as intellectual successors to Kant. Despite the many differences between their work and the work of Kant, there are significant aspects of their theories that are built on a Kantian foundation. Piaget explicitly discusses both the points of his agreement and disagreement with Kant, and the points of agreement are significant. Although Erikson says very little about Kant, in some ways he illustrates the spirit of Kant quite well, arguably better than any other contemporary psychologist. My purpose in analyzing the Kantian elements is not simply to conduct an exercise in the history of ideas, but to try to explicate the fundamental rationale of some of prominent contemporary Western theories to help deepen our understanding. I also expect this exercise to provide a framework for a meaningful cross-cultural comparison of the dialectics of the affirmation and denial of the self.

The strongest Kantian legacy expressed by Piaget is in his notion of the cognitive *schema*, which is most central to Piagetian psychology. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant (1781/1966, pp. 121–127) explains that a schema is an intermediate representation of phenomena that stands between an abstract and unchangeable category of the understanding in the purely rational realm on the one side, and changeable sensory representation of the phenomena in the empirical realm on the other. At several points in his *Biology and Knowledge* (e.g., pp. 53, 117) Piaget (1967/1971) has clarified how his conception of schema is derived by combining the insights of the philosopher Kant and the biologist Konrad Lorenz. In Piaget's system, the individual, as an active *organizer* of incoming information, uses preexisting schemata as if they were pigeonholes in a preforma into which pieces of information could be put, as appropriate. In the Kantian theory, as in the Piagetian, knowing is a top-down process, starting with ways of making meaning that putatively exist within the individual prior to the acquisition of experience and information. Thus, according to the Piagetian model, human cognitive development originates from the sensorimotor capacities with which a newborn baby is able to repeat patterned activities such as reaching out for objects and clasping and pulling them. In Chapter 4, we shall discuss Piaget's model of cognitive development and examine its implications for the development of the self-as-knower. Here we may note that Piaget (1966) follows Kant closely in understanding not only the cognitive aspect but also the moral development of children. In Piaget's theory, human moral reasoning moves from an earlier stage of heteronomy, i.e., being directed from outside, through someone else's (the family's or teachers') prompting, to a more developed stage of autonomy, i.e., being self-driven and guided by completely internalized moral principles. This direction of development from heteronomy to autonomy is a virtual translation of the principles of morals enunciated by Kant (1785/1909) in his *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Lawrence Kohlberg (1981, 1984) and colleagues (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983), who follow Piaget in his studies of moral development, have built his system quite explicitly on neo-Kantian lines, often following Rawls's (1971) interpretation of Kant (see Kohlberg, 1984, p. 401). It tries to show how individuals tend to arrive at universal ethical principles such as the categorical imperative enunciated by Kant.

In the work of Piaget and Kohlberg, persons are obviously considered to be moral *agents* guided by their capacity to think about what is right and what is wrong. Some critics (e.g., Bailey, 1985; Rich, 1985) have argued that Kohlberg, like Piaget before him, has paid less attention to feelings than they deserve. Others (e.g., Straughan, 1985) have complained that Kohlberg's theory has neglected the complex relationship between moral judgment and moral *action*. In brief, the Piaget–Kohlberg studies are viewed as overdeveloped on how people think about moral issues but underdeveloped on how they feel and act morally. Regardless of such shortcomings, Piaget and Kohlberg deserve all the credit for bringing about a lush green oasis of studies of the moral aspect of persons in the middle of the value-free desert of modern psychology. Their relative neglect of feeling and action implies that Piaget and Kohlberg do not do adequate justice to the trilogy of the mind that is needed for a well-rounded account of personhood. This should partly explain why Piaget and Kohlberg have not been recognized as personality theorists in contemporary textbooks.

By comparison, Erik Erikson provides a relatively more well-rounded theory of personhood. He incorporates some of the Piagetian principles of cognitive development in his theory and supplements them amply with a rich account of affective development as well as a theory of social and identity development. Widely recognized as a personality theorist, Erikson speaks more clearly and emphatically than any other contemporary personality theorist about the development in the individual of a sense of autonomy and will guided by the feelings of shame and guilt. He views the individual explicitly within the framework of a social *ethos* and speaks of how, over the span of a lifetime, individuals arrive at the "acceptance of the fact that one's life is one's own responsibility" (1968, p. 139). Erikson thus develops a psychological model of the person as a responsible human being who thinks, feels, and wills. He has tried to place personhood in the center of

his theory, as Kant placed personhood at the center of Western thought during the Age of Enlightenment. Moreover, there is a tolerable consensus of opinion that Erikson's theory places identity at the center of his conception of personhood. Against this background, I shall present a fairly detailed overview of Erikson's theory of identity formation in the next chapter.

The Historical Background of the Dialectics of the Self in Indian Thought

The dialectical opposition between the yea-sayers and nay-sayers in regard to the self originated in the history of Indian thought over 2000 years prior to the articulation of similar dialectics in 18th-century Europe. A strong affirmation of the Self, or Ātman, is a central topic in the early Upaniṣads, which go back to the ancient era roughly between 1500 to 600 BCE. Gautama Buddha (ca. 563–483) strongly rejected the Upaniṣadic claims to a permanent Self. His doctrine of the no-self (*anattā*) was articulated in the first major system of Buddhist thought called the Theravāda, meaning the doctrine of the elders. This system is outlined in a set of texts called the Nikāyas, or *suttas*, which were composed in the Pali language sometime before the 3rd century BCE. Over the centuries, the Upaniṣadic ideas inspired six major systems of orthodox Indian thought, namely (1) Mīmāṁsā, sometime also called the Pūrva (i.e., earlier) Mīmāṁsā, (2) Vedānta or Uttara (later) Mīmāṁsā, (3) Sāṅkhya, (4) Yoga, (5) Nyāya, and (6) Vaiśeṣika. Of these six systems, the Vedānta is arguably the strongest supporter of the doctrine of the Self. This system was articulated first by Bādarāyaṇa in the form of a set of aphorisms probably around the beginning of the Common Era, and was developed and popularized by Śaṅkara (ca. 788–820)[16] and his followers in subsequent centuries. Śaṅkara's strong affirmation of the Self was clearly expressed in a dialectical opposition to the Buddhist denial of the self. The twin systems of Sāṅkhya and Yoga also affirm a permanent Self. I shall discuss their views in Chapter 5.

The Buddhist denial and the Vedāntic affirmation of the self readily present themselves as topics for East–West comparison. Indeed, serious scholars in comparative philosophy have gone to considerable length in comparing the Buddhist position with the Humean (e.g., Hoffmann, 1980), and the Vedāntist doctrines with those of Kant (Bhattacharyya, 1907/1983). Given the great differences in time, sociocultural context, language, worldview, and many other factors that separate these apparently similar doctrines, the task of systematically comparing them is not easy, to say the least. Edward Conze (1963a,b), a well-known contemporary British scholar in the field of Buddhist studies, has pointed out that the thought patterns involved in the denial of the self in Buddhism and in Hume's work are very complex, and he has cautioned that this complexity has often led to spurious comparisons between the two. To help avoid superficial comparisons, he has suggested that comparative studies should look carefully at (1) the specific proposi-

tions presented in various texts, (2) the motivation in spelling them out, or the guiding purpose of the inquiry from which they emerge, (3) the arguments used in their justification, and (4) the social, cultural, and religious context in which the statements were made. A close look at such contexts should prevent us from being misled by "verbal coincidences [that] frequently mask the fundamental divergences" in underlying concepts (Conze, 1963b, p. 105). As can be easily seen, the first three of the four points suggested by Conze for careful consideration are very similar in spirit to the guidelines suggested earlier in this chapter for comparing the Humean denial and the Kantian affirmation of the self. To repeat them here, I suggest that it is necessary to specify what is affirmed or denied, on what grounds, the goals that guided the inquiry, and the consequences that follow from accepting specific conclusions. I propose to follow the same guidelines in making cross-cultural comparisons, while at the same time keeping Conze's suggestions in mind.

As noted by Conze, a distinctive feature of the Indian intellectual tradition was its *contemplative* character. Through the millennia, a contemplative quest for truth has gone hand in hand with a deeply personal interest in spiritual well-being. Although such a quest sometimes overlapped with what we call "religion" in the West, in India religious life was probably not organized around institutions like the church, nor was the spiritual quest tied closely to theism. Regardless of their doctrinal differences, the "heterodox" Buddhist scholars as well as the "orthodox" scholars of the various Upaniṣadic schools of thought shared a deep interest in meditative search for inner peace and personal edification. Yogic techniques were a commonly shared aspect of the meditative search for truth; there was no need to be a theist or to believe in specific doctrines such as those of Patañjali's Yoga in order to practice meditation. Such connection between meditative practices, personal spiritual quest, and formal philosophy contrasts with the dispassionate and impersonal search for truth in the Greek tradition of *theoria*. Also, the emphasis in meditative quest on the evidence of "inner" experience sharply contrasts with the insistence on publicly demonstrable truths in the Baconian tradition of science.

By mentioning the contrasts just noted, I do not wish to suggest a complete East–West dichotomy in such matters. As is well known, there has been in fact a Western counterpart of the contemplative and meditative quest; it is illustrated, for instance, in the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and in St. Augustine's search for truth in the inner domain of the human soul. According to Conze (1963b, p. 109), the meditative inquiry in the Christian tradition "vanished from sight from Northern Europe soon after the Reformation," although I see clear impressions of the same in Husserl's *Ideas* (1931/1962) and in his *Cartesian Meditations* (1933/1977). As we shall note in the following chapter, Erikson makes some Biblical references in his discussion of identity that echo the meditative and so-called "mystical" elements of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But these are rare in contemporary psychology. Although William James's (1902/1958) *Varieties of Religious Experi-*

ence pioneered modern psychological studies of mystical and religious experience, this has remained a taboo topic. Elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1984) I have discussed the historical background of this taboo and the problem it creates for East–West understanding on matters relating to the psychology of mysticism. The study of meditative practices is a topic closely related to religious and/or mystical experience because of the putative connection between them. Although meditation and the altered states of consciousness to which it is said to lead have caught the attention of many contemporary psychologists in the East as well as the West, research in this area is marginalized; it is rarely included in the mainstream of psychology today. We shall return to the issue of altered states of consciousness later on as appropriate. Here it is necessary to briefly refer to it since the evidence supporting both the denial and affirmation of the self in the Indian context is derived from the putative experience of altered or "higher" states of consciousness attained through various meditative practices such as those described in the varieties of Yoga.

The Affirmation of the Self in the Upaniṣads

There were two central topics of inquiry for the ancient Upaniṣads: the nature of the *self*, and the nature of *reality* as a whole. The Upaniṣadic sages conceived of an ultimate principle of reality, or existence itself, and called it *Brahman*. A major conclusion of their inquiry, which is repeated in several places, is that the Self is identical with Brahman.[17] But what does this thesis mean? What were the kinds of concerns that prompted their inquiry? By what means did they arrive at this conclusion?

We do not know much about the lives of persons who may have authored the Upaniṣads. In the Indian tradition their principles are often considered to be inspired or "heard" (*śruti*), rather than spoken, by embodied humans. Nevertheless, the texts say a bit about the kind of people who were engaged in dialogues, and the characters in conversation express their mundane as well as lofty concerns. One of the famous dialogues about the nature of the self is between the old sage Yājñavalkya with his two wives on the eve of his retirement from active life (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 2.3.1–14; 4.5.1–15). In this context, the sage says that love for such things as family, wealth, gods, scriptures, and everything else that we encounter in the mundane life of most people is only the result of our love for our own selves. Thus, one loves one's children not for their sake, but because we love to have our own needs (such as the need to be wanted, loved, and so on) satisfied through them. Hence, he says, self is the subject deserving of the most serious study and contemplation. The *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad begins with an account of a conversation among a group of scholars who are raising a variety of issues for discussion: What is the cause or origin of the world? Is it Brahman (the ultimate principle of existence)? Whence are we born? What sustains our lives? Who controls the happiness and suffering in our lives? Is it Time, our inherent nature,

necessity, or chance, which determines that? In several places in the text that follows, there is reference to the self as an enjoyer and sufferer in life (*bhoktā*). Here we see a concern about suffering and happiness blended with a spirit of inquiry into profound philosophical issues.

In a famous dialogue in the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad, a teenage boy, Naciketas, is described as engaged in a conversation with Yama, who was believed to be the gatekeeper of heaven and hell. This Upaniṣad offers a very brief but interesting account of how the young lad lands in such a strange spot in the first place. The story goes that one day Naciketas realizes that his father was giving away all his belongings to the gods in a form of sacrificial worship. So he asks his father whether he was going to give his son away as well. Shocked by this preposterous question, the old man says yes in a fit of anger, and his words come true. As a result, Naciketas lands at the gate of heaven and hell, but cannot enter because Yama, the gatekeeper and himself the god of death, was away on earth on his regular round to pick ripe souls. Upon his return, Yama finds this unexpected guest stranded at the gate for 3 days. Embarrassed by having inadvertently failed to provide hospitality to this unexpected guest, Yama grants Naciketas three wishes. As per his first wish, the boy asks that all his father's wishes be fulfilled and that he be united with a cheerful father.

This wish granted, Naciketas then asks for the secret knowledge of the heavenly fire, which grants him a place in the heaven. For his third and final wish, Naciketas asks for the secret of what lies beyond birth and death. Now Yama is not ready to grant him this wish; he offers Naciketas a lot of things instead: innumerable cattle, horses, elephants, and gold, a great abode on earth, and sons and grandsons for as many years as he might desire. Naciketas rejects this offer, saying that all worldly pleasures and things are but ephemeral. Yama repeatedly cajoles the boy, pleading with him to ask for something else, and offers him an empire on earth, immense powers to enjoy the wealth and pleasures, plus chariots, lyres, and beautiful heavenly maidens unavailable to mortals. Naciketas turns down this offer too, insisting that pleasures of the earth and in the heaven would come to an end some time or other; he would rather know what lies ahead right now.

Pleased by the boy's determination, Yama commends him for being able to distinguish between the pleasurable (*preyas*) and the Good (*śreyas*) in the first place, and then also for opting for the Good instead of pleasure. Yama decries persons blinded by the lure of wealth and pleasures and appreciates Naciketas's rare aspiration to reach for something higher. Upon hearing this, Naciketas pleads with Yama to reveal to him the true knowledge (*vidyā*) of what lies beyond what is right (*dharma*) and not right (*adharma*), beyond the past and the future, saying, in other words, that he wished to grapple with the absolute and eternal principles (Kaṭha, 2.14). Yama then proceeds to instruct him about the nature of the Self, the eternal principle in persons that never changes. This principle, Yama says, is tinier than the atom and larger than the largest of things, it is the One underlying the

Many, the Permanent (*nitya*) behind the Ephemeral (*anitya*) in the entire universe. It cannot be divided or destroyed; the Self is not killed by the destruction of the body. It is by *knowing* the changeless Self behind all the changes that one attains immortality. But the knowledge of the Self cannot be obtained by listening to a lot of lectures or by reasoning anymore than happiness can be gained by spending money. The Knowledge (*vidyā*) of the eternal principle (*akṣara*) is quite different from the knowledge of changeable (*kṣara*) objects in the world. One cannot obtain the Knowledge by reaching out to objects in the world; Knowledge of the Self is hidden deep within the innermost self, in the very "heart" of the person. It lies beyond the senses, the mind, and the intellect; its essence cannot be seen with the eyes or captured by the mind or by words, for the Self is not observable and locatable within physical bodies; it is disembodied, and hence everywhere like space. Toward the end of the text, the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (6.10–11) explains that the Self is experienced when, through the practice of Yoga, the five senses are held back, the mind is undistracted, and the intellect is stabilized.

We may pause here to reflect on the nature of the Upaniṣadic inquiry. From the short description of characters involved in the dialogues, the Upaniṣadic texts convey that the topic of their inquiry was fit for conversations between husband and wife, father and son, teacher and student, groups of scholars, and other mortals. There is repeated reference to things liked and disliked, to the desire to overcome the suffering in the lives of ordinary mortals, and to the aspiration to gain happiness higher than that available to emperors on earth and souls in heaven. The kind of happiness they thought of is not the kind that is shared by the residents of a utopian society—the kind that has attracted Westerners from Plato through Bacon to Skinner. The Upaniṣadic quest for happiness and for the highest good is typically fit not for the society as a whole, but for *individuals* aiming at nothing but the highest standards and willing to turn away from the mundane pleasures in pursuit of the same. In pointing this out I do not mean to suggest that the Indian tradition as a whole was disinterested in the happiness of the society as a whole or in the problems of governance attached to that concern. The popularity of the great Indian epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, is testimony to the abiding interest in India in the problems of the society and of its governance. Moreover, a great many Indians continue to worship the goddess of wealth, and their unabashed interest in the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh is displayed in classic sexological treatises like the *Kāma Sūtra* and the erotic sculptures of Khajuraho. Yet, there is also a strong and historically persistent cultural theme of the value of the pursuit of a perpetual inner source of nonsensual experience of bliss, which is the guiding principle of the Upaniṣadic inquiry. Let us look a bit closer look at the bliss they sought and how one attempts to attain it.

As the story of Naciketas indicates, the bliss sought by the Upaniṣads was neither worldly pleasure nor otherworldly in the sense of what is putatively gained in heaven. It was not "religious" in the sense that it was to be dispensed through the grace of God. Although the story of Naciketas features a god called Yama, he recommends the practice of Yoga as a means to attain it—a means available to ordinary mortals here on earth. As noted by Dasgupta (1922/1975), and rightly in my opinion, "[t]here is no relation here of the worshipper and the worshipped and no prayers are offered to it, but the whole quest is of highest truth, and the true self of man is discovered as the greatest reality" (Vol. 1, p. 33). There is a deep concern in the Upaniṣads for the highest Good, and yet the Upaniṣadic thinkers are eager to take the inquiry beyond the realm of the right and the wrong. This stance is consistent with the dispassionateness of the Greek *theoria*; it even echoes the spirit of "value-free" science. Yet, to the extent that the Good (*śreyas*) is sought, the Upaniṣads show no interest in changing the world as does Baconian science, and like St. Augustine they look inward for truth.

Here, insofar as the Self affirmed by the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad is nonspatial, indivisible, and indestructible, it might seem to be the same as the Cartesian unextended soul-substance. However, the similarity between the two is quite superficial; the Upaniṣads did not equate the self, soul, and the mind as Descartes did, nor did they think of the Self as a substance with thinking, or *cogito*, as its main attribute. Besides, while Descartes thought in terms of a thoroughgoing dualism that equated the self with the mind and attributed to it the capacity to experience pleasure and pain, most Upaniṣads thought strictly in monistic terms and conceived of the Self as beyond the mind and beyond the experience of pleasure and pain. Although the Upaniṣads were concerned with overcoming suffering, they were not motivated by the concern to avoid damnation on the Day of Judgment, as was Descartes. Indeed, it seems fair to say that *what* the Upaniṣads thought the Self was is inextricably connected with *how* they suggested it should be known. Unlike Descartes, whose "meditations" essentially displayed an exercise of the power of reasoning, the Upaniṣadic quest was fundamentally contemplative. Indeed, the Upaniṣads inspired a psychology and a view of consciousness radically different from Western psychology in the shadow of Descartes.

The *Maṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad explains in 12 short versus the stance that is necessary to adopt in order to know the Self. At the outset it declares that the Self is identical with the Brahman (*ayamātmā brahma*). Then it goes on to distinguish the various states of consciousness and their distinctive features. First is the *wakeful* state of consciousness characterized by an outwardly cognitive (*bahiḥprajña*) stance. It allows us to deal with gross (*sthūla*) objects in the public domain of the external world accessible by means of the five sense organs and the five motor organs aided by the mind and the intellect. Second, the *dream* state is characterized as inwardly cognitive (*antaḥprajña*) stance, which provides access to the exclusive and isolated (*vivikta*) domain of the individual's private world. Third, the state of *deep sleep* is said to be characterized by a unified (*ekī bhūta*) stance that is neither

inward looking nor outward looking and allows us to enjoy a certain kind of quietude and bliss (*ānanda*). Last, the *fourth state* of consciousness is described as follows:

> Not inwardly cognitive, not outwardly cognitive, not both-wise cognitive, not a cognition-mass, not cognitive, not non-cognitive, unseen, with which there can be no dealing, ungraspable, having no distinctive mark, non-thinkable, that cannot be designated, the essence of the assurance of which is the state of being one with the Self, the cessation of development, tranquil, benign, without a second. He is the Self (Ātman). (*Maṇḍūkya* Upaniṣad, 7th stanza; translation by R. E. Hume, 1931, p. 392; quoted without the Sanskrit terms in parentheses)

It should be obvious from the above that the evidence for the Self affirmed by the Upaniṣads is derived from the *fourth state* of consciousness, the like of which is not usually recognized either by contemporary psychology or by the empiricist or rationalist epistemologies shaped by the Enlightenment thinkers. This is where we can see some of the deepest differences between the Indian and Western epistemologies in general, and psychologies in particular. This is an important topic that deserves some clarification and comments.

Once again, as noted in the remarks of Conze cited earlier in this section, the contemplative approach to truth, which was very much part of the neo-Platonic tradition from at least Plotinus to Meister Eckhart, has become marginalized in the West. With all the insistence on the evidence of *experience* in the tradition of British empiricism, an unwritten Western convention limits the scope of experience to the wakeful state of consciousness; the evidence of all other states is excluded out of hand. Freud was an exception to this rule; he tried to open the doors to insights to be gained from the content of dreams and from the depths of the unconscious, and Jung tried to peek into the mysteries of the "oceanic feeling." However, by and large, Western psychology has neglected the evidence of the altered and "higher" states of consciousness. It seems to me that a primary reason for such neglect is that the so-called "higher" states attainable through various forms of meditation or contemplation have been considered "mystical." Moreover, the term *mystical* has unfortunately acquired several pejorative connotations, such as mysterious, irrational, and dangerous. In a previous publication (Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 27–29) I have pointed out how in his essay, "Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," the British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1935, p. 66) has portrayed the contemplative approaches as a "lazy man's philosophy," and has deprecated mysticism in several ways in many of his writings (see, e.g., Russell, 1917, pp. 1–32). Although many Western psychologists today may have shed such negative bias, the study of "altered states of consciousness" has been marginalized.

The result of the neglect of the evidence of the altered state of consciousness in the West is what Charles Tart (1972) has called the "state-specific sciences." In the study of the natural sciences, the exclusion of the altered states does not matter, because the subject matter of the natural sciences resides in the public domain,

accessible to all through the wakeful state of awareness. But their exclusion from psychology restricts the very subject matter of psychology, which should normally include the entire domain of experience, including the whole spectrum of the varied states of consciousness. As noted, the exclusion of experience altogether from psychology leads to an approach like Skinner's, which rejects the self out of hand along with the mind and becomes a study of the behavior of *others*. It is ironic indeed that those who sing the glory of empiricism ask us to rely on the evidence of experience, but the range of experience we are supposed to rely on in the name of science is severely limited. Although the rationalist epistemology allows us to include abstractions "added by the mind" to what is given in experience, the rationalist approach, too, restricts its scope to the wakeful state of awareness. Nevertheless, the rationalist approach provides an invaluable complement to empirical knowledge, and as far as self-knowledge goes, reason can merely provide a strong argument in support of the need to grant the continued existence of the self-as-knower, as Kant's contributions have shown. However, such an approach does not provide any experiential evidence to help *verify* the existence or nature of the self-as-knower. It is precisely by providing verifiable sources of self-knowledge that the Upaniṣadic tradition complements the shortcomings of the combined resources of empiricism and rationalism.

What the Upaniṣads offer is not simply a doctrinaire affirmation of the Self, plus some verbal pointers to on essentially indescribable Self; they also offer a clear account of what would be attained through the experience of the Self, and suggest specific ways to get it. The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (2.1), for instance, describes the Brahman to be attained through the realization of the Self as the Truth (*satyam*), Knowledge (*jñānam*), and Infinite (*anantam*). One who knows this, it declares, has all desires fulfilled. Further (in 2.5), it says that the Self consists of Bliss (*ānanda*). The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (2.8) also provides an account of a graded series of increasingly higher levels of bliss. It starts by counting the happiness attained by a strong, agile, and well-read youth, who has the world's wealth at his disposal, as the base unit of bliss: the highest that a human being can enjoy. A 100-fold of this, it suggests, is the bliss of the angels, and a 100-fold of that is the bliss of certain other species of superhuman creatures, and so on. Through such a geometric progression, it finally estimates the Bliss of Brahman to be 100 quintillion times higher than what a young, well-endowed human being can enjoy. One is not sure whether to dismiss this estimate as a hyperbole, for bliss is said to be something beyond both pain and pleasure, and because its search is said to demand the resolute cultivation of dispassionateness. Be that as it may, the consequence of experiencing the Self is supposed to be most highly positive. If the ways to get there are well specified, then it would at least be possible in principle to check on the cash value of the sumptuous promissory note.

The Upaniṣads do in fact suggest the way to attain Self-realization. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (2.4.5; 4.5.6) suggests studying, reflection, and contempla-

tion (*śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana*) as steps to be taken for attaining self-realization. This suggestion has been explained in detail and developed into a systematic "technology of the self" by generations of followers of the system of the Advaita Vedānta. The Advaita Vedāntic approach will be briefly outlined in the next chapter, and the processes involved in the recommended path to self-realization will be discussed in cognitive psychological terms in Chapter 4. Here, it may be noted that the Upaniṣads refer to other approaches as well. For instance, the *Maitrāyaṇī* Upaniṣad (6.18), which is considered one of the relatively later Upaniṣads, also mentions breathing exercises and other techniques described in Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms as a means to the experience of *samādhi*, an altered state that ostensibly involves the direct experience of the Self. If one so desires, one could follow the steps recommended by either the Advaita Vedāntic or the Yogic path, and depending on what one obtains at the end of the path, the Upaniṣadic affirmation of the Self and claims regarding its nature might be either verified or falsified.

The Denial of the Self in Early (Theravāda) Buddhism[18]

As indicated by the widely known story of his life, Siddhārtha Gautama became disillusioned with the wealth and power he enjoyed as a young and happily married prince, and, tormented by the sight of suffering, chose an ascetic life in search of a radical solution to the problem of suffering. Unlike Hume, a gentleman scholar who practiced philosophy as a rigorous intellectual exercise without an ostensible purpose other than "knowledge for its own sake," Gautama passionately followed a contemplative path to help end suffering for himself, and perhaps for the world at large. He practiced Yoga, which was part of an established tradition, although as far as we know today, an explicit theory of Yoga in the form of Patañjali's aphorisms had not yet been formulated. That Gautama followed the Yogic tradition suggests that he ostensibly believed in the evidence of the altered states of consciousness. As the story goes, Gautama attained enlightenment after practicing austerities for years, and then set out to give his message to the world. The texts of Theravāda Buddhism are said to state the gist of Gautama's teachings.

According to Gautama, the root cause of suffering is the thirst (*taṇhā* in Pāli) for continued existence. It is common for people to try to acquire things that they like, to feel attached to the accouterments of the Me and Mine, and to desire for their perpetual possession. Born in this process is the tacit assumption that the "I" or self is an abiding entity that will continue to exist, keep the possession of good things, hopefully adding increasingly better ones to its stock, in perpetuity. But it is self-evident that everything in life, including everything about the person as a psychophysical being, is impermanent. According to Gautama, a person with mind and body (*nāma, rūpa*) consists of five elements (*pañca khandhas*): (1) material form (*rūpa*), (2) feeling or sensation (*vedanā*), (3) perception (*saññā*),

(4) mental dispositions arising from impressions left behind by past experience and behavior (*saṁkhāra*), and (5) reason or intelligence (*viññāna*). All of these aspects of personhood are impermanent. They have no absolute existence; they exist only relatively or in loose relationship with one another. It is a fundamental error to think of oneself as some permanent entity that is identical with, or in possession of, some material form, perception, feeling, disposition, or reason. Thus, if I think of myself as having a handsome and healthy body, or a happy feeling, or a humane disposition, or possessing superior intelligence, it would no doubt be deeply frustrating to find myself no longer to be what I thought I was forever.

Against the background of this sort of reasoning, what Gautama denied was the concept of the self, soul, or ego as an abiding or unchangeable entity. It should now be clear why the Upaniṣadic concept of the Ātman was unacceptable to Gautama. Such denial is very much understandable insofar as the Upaniṣads occasionally use the term Ātman in compound forms such as *jīvātman*, implying a bodily self, thereby suggesting a dubious equation of an unchanging soul with a mutable living being or an everrevisable cognition. Gautama insisted that the impermanent states of perception, feeling, behavioral disposition, and so on succeed one another without having any underlying permanent, self-identical substance to unite them. Thus far, the Buddhist denial of the self would appear to be compatible with the Humean denial of the self. However, the similarity is deceptive, because, unlike Hume who rejected a necessary connection between cause and effect, Gautama neither questioned causality nor did he doubt the possibility of moral action for the questionable connection between intentions and subsequent actions.

One of Gautama's axiomatic assumptions was the "law of dependent orignation" (*paṭiccasamuppāda* in Pāli, *pratītyasamutpāda* in Sanskrit), which suggests that "from the arising of this that arises; if this is not that does not come to be" (*Saṁyutta-nikāya* II, 64–65; see Conze, Horner, Snellgrove, & Waley, 1954, p. 66). This amounts basically to the acceptance of causality, which is precisely the idea that Hume denied. Moreover, as noted by Rhys Davids (1934, pp. 48–49), Gautama believed in the concept of *dhamma*, which implied a cosmic principle of orderliness in physical, psychical, and moral domains. The following words from *Suttapiṭaka* indicate the Buddhist assumption of a moral order in the world: "Not of the like result are right and wrong ... Wrong leads to baleful, right, to happy doom [*sic*]" (quoted by Rhys Davids, 1934, p. 49). These words echo the "Law of Karma," which is widely recognized by students of Indian thought as a matter of belief shared equally by most schools of Buddhist as well as Upaniṣadic thought throughout the ages. Moreover, most Buddhists also believe in the idea of the transmission of the consequences of good and bad actions across life cycles.[19] This idea follows as a corollary of the doctrine of karma for, given the common observation that many good deeds go unrewarded and sins unpunished within the same life cycle, all unfinished accounts must be eventually settled. This could not

happen except in subsequent life cycles in which the individual would be reborn. How could the Buddha believe, on the one hand, in perpetual moral accountability of persons in an endless series of life cycles and, on the other hand, deny an abiding self at the same time?

The answer to this puzzle lies in the Buddhist view that what transfers from one life cycle to another in the "wheel of existence" (*bhavacakra*) is not some kind of a fixed "soul," but karma, meaning the consequences of good and bad actions. A new form of life is born when an old one dies, even as one candle extinguishes while passing its flame to the next. Thus, according to Buddhism, as Rhys Davids (1901) puts it, "[b]irth is not rebirth, but new birth; transmigration of soul becomes transmigration of karma; metempsychosis gives way to metamorphosis" (p. 433).[20] Even if one accepts the idea that after the end of one life cycle a different one begins, what about the continuity within any given cycle? Would it not be the *same* person who enjoys or suffers the consequences of one's own good and bad actions while undergoing *changes* or metamorphoses within a given life cycle? Gautama's unique way of reconciling antinomies like sameness and change, or permanence and impermanence, suggests a way out of this dilemma. Here is a translation of his words attributed to him in a text known as *Udāna*:

> Some say that the "I" endures after death; others say it perishes. Both have fallen into grievous error. For if the "I" be perishable, the fruit people strive for will perish too and then deliverance will be without merit. If, as others say, the "I" does not perish, it must always be identical and unchanging. The moral aims and salvation would be unnecessary, for there would be no use in attempting to change the unchangeable ... (Words from *Udāna* quoted by Krishnan, 1952, p. 359)

These words nicely capture a moralist's dilemma: Personal identity must be granted for justice to be made, since only the same person who did something right or wrong may be appropriately rewarded or punished. On the other hand, persons cannot be assumed to remain identical or unchanged if improvement is expected. Gautama tried to avoid being caught between the horns of this dilemma by choosing a *middle course* between the opposite poles of the sameness-versus-change antinomy. In *Visuddhimagga* (xvii), he is reported as saying that the doctrine of the middle course

> rejects the heresy that he who experiences the fruit of the deed is the same as the one who performed the deed, and also rejects the converse one that he who experiences the fruit of a deed is different from the one who performed the deed.... (Quoted in Mathur, 1978, p. 257)[21]

To put it in contemporary phraseology, Gautama accepted personal identity as identity-in-difference. It is hard to say whether this view of personal identity provides a completely rational solution. Gautama thought that it is impossible to provide rational solutions to such problems as whether the world has a beginning or no beginning, whether a person remains the same or changes. When someone asked such questions, he often chose to remain silent.

Gautama's silence on the issue of permanence versus impermanence of the self suggests that there is no definite answer to this question, one way or another. This sounds strikingly similar to Hume's indecision or skepticism. But unlike Hume, who found such ambiguity of the situation to be intolerable, and who ran away from philosophy for a life in pursuit of pleasure, Gautama remained steadfast and persisted with an ascetic lifestyle. While both Gautama and Hume found the mind to be in a perpetual state of flux without an abiding self to hang on to, Gautama tamed the runaway stream of consciousness by means of Yogic meditation. The idea of the flowing character of the stream of thought—and other continual changes, for that matter—is represented in Buddhism by the metaphor of the flame, and putting a stop to the flow of this stream is likened to the extinction of a flame. Indeed, the literal meaning of the Sanskrit term *nirvāṇa* (Pāli: *nibbāna*) is to extinguish a flame or fire. Buddhists claim that the ostensibly planned and deliberate cessation of thought processes effectively tames or extinguishes desires that fuel the self-perpetuating process of becoming that manifests in life. According to *Saṁyutta-nikaya* (II, 117), "The stopping of becoming is nirvāṇa" (Conze et al., 1954, p. 92).

As noted by Dasgupta (1922/1975), scholars of Buddhism have tried to understand and explain the state of *nirvāṇa*. The Pali texts describe it variously as "a happy state, as pure annihilation, as an inconceivable existence or as a changeless state" (Vol. 1, p. 108). Regardless of differences of opinion about its precise nature, *nirvāṇa* does not amount to death; one who attains it comes back to ordinary states of awareness; the flame is rekindled, so to speak. Obviously Gautama must have returned to an ordinary wakeful state when someone asked him to say whether the self was permanent or mutable. But by that time, having once experienced the state of *nirvāṇa*, he could take dialectics of thought, as well as the inevitable dialectics of the lure of pleasure and the fear of pain, in his stride. He did not need an ego with elaborate defense mechanisms to fend off the greedy and selfish id on the one side and a repressive superego on the other. It is in this sense that the Buddhist denial of the self leads to selflessness.

NOTES

1. For details of the debate over this issue, see G. Hunt and J. B. Scott (1920, pp. 215–251, and particularly pp. 233 and 239) for references to the three-fifths rule. I wish to thank Professor Michael Fellman for helping me in understanding the nature of this issue, and in finding appropriate references for it.
2. For the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada, see *Dominion Law Reports*, 1928, Vol. 4, pp. 98–125; and for the ruling of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on Edwards v. Attorney General of Canada, see *Western Weekly Reports*, 1929, Vol. 3, pp. 479–495.
3. Kane (1968, Vol. 5.2, p. 1995) quotes the following words from the *Ṛg Veda* (6.86.5): "mā va eno anyakṛtam bhujema," which almost literally means: May we not have to suffer for the sin committed by another.

4. This is a translation by Kane of a verse from a chapter called the Śāntiparvan (153.38) of the epic Mahābhārata. In this instance, unlike in most others, Kane does not quote the original words in Sanskrit
5. Nāhī devāpāśī mokṣāce gāṭhoḷe I āṇuni nirāḷe dyāve hātī II Tukārām, poem No. 2325.
6. Various Upaniṣads use different synonymous terms, all meaning "self as a knower": *jñānātman* (*Kaṭha*, 3.4), *vijñānātman* (*Praśna*, 4.9), *vijñānamaya ātman* (*Muṇḍaka* 3.2.7), and *jñātā* (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 2.4.14). The idea of the self as enjoyer/sufferer appears in the *Kaṭha* (3.4) and the *Śvetāśvatara* (1.8 & 12).
7. The words quoted here are from Haldane and Ross's translation of Descartes's (1911, Vol. 1) Meditation II of his *Meditations on the First Philosophy.*
8. The Sanskrit term closest to the contemporary connotation of cognition is perhaps *prajñā*. It seems to me that there are several terms such as *vijñāna* and others derived from the root *jña*, meaning "to know," and are suggestive of selective shades of what we call cognition. While the perceptual aspects of cognitive processes are often covered in Sanskrit literature in the context of epistemological discussion on direct perception as a source of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), the constructive aspect of cognition is implied in the notions of *saṁkalpa*, meaning cognitive synthesis or integration, and *vikalpa*, meaning analysis and differentiation. I think *bhāva* is the Sanskrit term closest to affect, and *karma* is the closest equivalent of conation. These parallels will be discussed in separate chapters devoted to the trilogy of mind.
9. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (4.5.6), the sage Yājñavalkya, in the context of speaking to his two wives about his plans to retire from active life, says that everyone should try to know about and meditate on the true nature of the Self. Everything is understood when the nature of the Self is understood:

   ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi I ātmani khalvare dṛaṣṭe śrute mate vijñāta idaṁ sarvaṁ viditam II

10. Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that I have been unable to find the terms "knower, feeler, and doer" in Bertocci's paper; they seem to be Allport's way of describing what Bertocci was trying to say. Nevertheless, I have retained Allport's words since they are an exact translation of Upaniṣadic view of the self as a *jñātā*, *bhoktā*, and *kartā*. There is a major difference between Bertocci's view of the self and that of the Advaita Vedāntist view of the Self in the Upaniṣadic tradition. While Bertocci (1945) thinks that "there is no acceptable reason for postulating an inactive ... self or soul beyond or underlying these activities" (p. 92), it is precisely such a Self that the Advaita Vedāntists have postulated. This difference will be discussed in the last chapter of this volume.
11. As we shall see in Chapter 4, Rom Harré (1987) offers a different account of the directionality of thoughts and of the selfsameness of the subject-pole of consciousness.
12. For an English translation of Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms, see J. H. Woods (1914/1972) or R. Prasada (1912).
13. In an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1986), I have discussed how the practice of meditation as recommended by the Advaita Vedānta would help an individual in transcending exclusive identification with a limited social sphere or with a totalitarian ideology.
14. Mead's views of the self are scattered in many of his writings. For a concise and organized statements of Mead's model, see Mead (1925/1968) and Meltzer (1972).
15. The words of Bādarāyaṇa's asphorism are: *anusmṛteśca* I
16. These dates of the life of Śaṅkara are not highly certain. Professor Karl H. Potter pointed out to me (in a personal communication) that the recent work of Allan Thrasher places the dates about a century earlier.
17. The following are the "great statements" (*mahā vākyas*), all of which basically mean "Thou art

THAT," or that the Ātman is identical with the Brahman. These are quoted and discussed in the fifth chapter of the *Pañcadaśī* of Vidyāraṇya:

   ahaṁ brahmāsmi iti I (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 1.4.10)
   ayamātmā brahma I (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4.4.5)
   tattvamasi, Śvetaketo iti I (*Chāndogya*, 6.8.7)
   prajñānaṁ brahma I (*Aitareya*, 3.3)

18. For an introductory account of the basic principles of Buddhist psychology, see Kalupahana (1987).
19. According to Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1): "*All* the Indian systems agree in believing that whatever action is done by an individual leaves behind it some sort of potency which has power to ordain for him joy or sorrow in the future according as it is good or bad" (p. 71; emphasis added). The doctrine of rebirth is a corollary of this doctrine, and the Buddha believed in it as well. In this connection, Dasgupta adds that "there has seldom been before or after Buddha any serious attempt to prove or disprove the doctrine of rebirth.... The Buddha also accepts it as a fact and does not criticize it" (p. 87).
20. I am grateful to David Ho for bringing this point to my attention.
21. Mathur refers to the following as the source of this quote: H. C. Warren (1963, p. xiv) *Buddhism in translations*, New York: Atheneum.

3

Two Perspectives on Person, Self, and Identity

Two Perspectives

The purpose of this chapter is to present in some detail two perspectives on person, self, and identity, one each from the Indian and Western traditions. These are not being presented as "representing" two traditions; indeed, it makes no sense to think that one could find a single perspective that adequately represents a rich and long tradition full of diverse perspectives within its fold. Nevertheless, it makes sense to bring together outlines of at least one perspective from each tradition so as to provide a meaningful context for a discussion of certain distinctive contributions of the differing traditions. Placing two perspectives close together should provide a meeting point for two different cultural horizons, and should give an opportunity to build some conceptual bridges, so to speak. Given the wide cultural gap that separates the traditions, one cannot expect to build a bridge just anywhere; it makes sense to look for a region where the gulf is narrow and the ground is solid, as it were. In my view, the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic perspectives on person, self, and identity present some essential commonalities to warrant a meaningful comparison. Both perspectives focus on the person as a responsible human being functioning within a moral order; both affirm selfhood, albeit in their own different ways; both sharply distinguish themselves from rival perspectives within their respective traditions that deny the self; and both place the issue of selfsameness at the core of their respective views of personhood. While it is important to start with the recognition of such similarities that warrant placing them side by side, it is equally important to remember Conze's warning, discussed in the previous chapter, that we must avoid spurious comparisons based on superficial similarities. To avoid this and to define the scope of their comparability, I will clarify certain important *differences* in the background, goals, and the nature of theory construction of the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic viewpoints.

The Context and Goals of the Advaita Vedāntic and Eriksonian Perspectives

The Advaita Vedānta has been widely recognized as one of the major "visions" (*darśana*), or competing perspectives, in Indian thought. These perspectives often have been considered to be "systems of philosophy," somewhat comparable to the Aristotelian, Kantian, or Hegelian philosophies of Western thought. However, as noted by Halbfass (1981/1988, Ch. 15), most of the Indian visions or *darśanas* should *not* be interpreted as systems of "pure theory" in the Greek–European sense. In addition to having conceptual frameworks based on the analytical spirit of investigative science (called *ānvīkṣikī* in Sanskrit) similar to that of the various systems of Western philosophy, the Indian *darśanas* such as Yoga and the Advaita Vedānta also have a practical program, which is called a "science of the self" (*ātmavidyā, adhyātmavidyā*) in the Indian tradition. As noted in Chapter 1, it would be appropriate to compare the Indian *science* of the self with what Foucault (1982/1988) has called the *technologies* of the self, i.e., sophisticated methods of knowing and taking care of oneself that developed in the Western tradition. The technologies of the self are comparable to psychotherapy to the extent that they involve methods for the application of psychological knowledge for changing the human condition from a less desirable to a more desirable state. Indeed, Śaṅkara, the chief exponent of the Advaita Vedānta, explicitly uses a medical metaphor comparing desires with disease for which Vedānta prescribes self-knowledge and detachment as remedy (see Śaṅkara, 1973, 19.1).[1] This "applied" feature of the Advaita Vedānta brings it close to Erikson's approach insofar as the latter follows Freud's lead in attempting to alleviate human anxieties by means of insight into the place of the ego in the functioning of the psyche.

In suggesting the comparability of the applied or "therapeutic" aspects of Advaita Vedāntic and Eriksonian approaches, I am not implying that they pursue exactly the same goals, for there are clear differences in the kind of problems for which they devise remedies and in the conceptions of "health"—or ideal human condition—that they aim to achieve. Erikson's approach developed in the context of a clinical practice where he helped mildly or severely disturbed children and youth and in the longitudinal study of bright undergraduates who he studied at Harvard University (Murray, 1938/1962). While in the clinical context the aim was ostensibly to redress anxieties and other symptoms of pathology and to achieve normalcy, in nonclinical contexts Erikson (1968, p. 92) cherished Marie Jahoda's notion of *positive mental health* as the goal to strive for. According to Jahoda (1955), a positively healthy person is characterized by the mastery of the environment rather than mere adaptation to it, unity of personality, ability to perceive oneself and the world realistically or correctly, and so on. As we shall see later in this chapter, Erikson (1981, p. 323) spoke toward the end of his career about pursuing existential and spiritual goals described in words like "liberation" and "salvation" that are arguably "higher" than Jahoda-style positive mental health. By contrast, the Advaita Vedānta system did not develop either in the context of clinical practice or in the modern academic setting; it was developed by and for persons aiming at liberation or "salvation" somewhat similar to what Erikson mentioned in his later writings.

Regardless of such differences, one can nevertheless speak of similarities between the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedānta systems to the extent that they aim toward self-transformation through insights into the nature of selfhood. Thus, Erikson (1975) speaks of "truly transforming scientific and therapeutic orientation created by Freud ... based on a radical change in the concept of the role and self-perception of the healer as well as of the patient." The goal of this therapeutic orientation, he suggests, is to "free a person from inner bondage–namely, the conscious acceptance of certain truths about himself and other" (p. 23). The Advaita Vedānta, too aims at freeing (*mukti*) a person from an inner bondage (*bandha*) that ties a person to the chain of the consequences of his or her own past thought and action, and it tries to reach this goal through the conscious acceptance of certain truths about the nature of the Self. Moreover, both the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic approaches aim to liberate a person from narrow egotism and fill him or her with love for entire humanity. As long as we keep in mind the differences in their contexts, goals, and methods and are also mindful of the specific ways in which their approaches resemble each other, we should be able to avoid spurious comparisons.

Theories of Personality: A Common Meeting Ground for the Advaita Vedāntic and Eriksonian Perspectives

It is a part of current convention in contemporary psychology to consider the Eriksonian approach to personhood as one of the prominent theories of personality. At the same time, it is equally conventional to consider Advaita Vedānta as a system of Indian philosophy. If we go beyond these conventions and look at the content of the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic approaches, we can think of both as alternative conceptual models that account for the nature of the human individual. To put it differently, the traditional system of the Advaita Vedānta contains almost everything necessary to be called a theory of personality according to the prevailing standards of contemporary psychology. To understand what I mean thereby, it is necessary to examine what is generally meant by "a theory of personality" in the contemporary psychological discourse and how the meaning evolved over the past few decades.

It is important to note that, unlike systems of Western philosophy and the *darśanas* of Indian thought, theory of personality is a relatively new field of studies even within the relatively short history of modern psychology. Its historical roots as a distinct field of study may be attributed to the publication in 1957 of Hall

and Lindzey's popular textbook, *Theories of Personality*. This text helped start undergraduate courses in theories of personality and became influential in training a whole generation of psychologists in America as well as in many other countries. In their book, Hall and Lindzey (1957, pp. 1–2) state at the outset that a comprehensive overview of personality must begin with "conceptions of man [*sic*]" advanced by great thinkers of the past: Plato and Aristotle, Aquinas, Hobbes, Locke, Machiavelli, and the like. However, given the enormity of the task of studying such great thinkers throughout history, they decided to limit their scope to the "past six or seven decades," starting their account with Freud's approach. In the subsequent editions of their text, Hall and Lindzey (1970, 1978) dropped some theories included in the previous editions and included others. In the preface of each edition, they express their dilemma as to which ones should be included from among the many eligible candidates.

It is interesting to note that in the third (1978) edition of their text, Hall and Lindzey included a chapter on "Eastern personality theory," by which they meant a summary of the ancient Abhidhamma Buddhist perspective prepared for the book by Daniel Goleman. Such expansion of the historical and geographical horizons is not unique to Hall and Lindzey; a competing text by Fadiman and Frager (1976), for instance, had already included non-Western perspectives on personal growth from the Yogic, Zen, and Sufi traditions. Such turning to the East in the field of personality studies may be seen as part of a wave of interest in Eastern spirituality and art in America during the Vietnam War era. The reason to view such interest in the East as a "wave" is that, although Fadiman and Frager's later edition (1994) continues to cover theories of Eastern origin, a later version of Hall and Lindzey does not even mention Buddhism or Yoga (see Hall, Lindzey, Loehlin, & Manosevitz, 1985).[2] Although a majority of North American texts of theories of personality continue to manifest presentist and Eurocentric biases, the Hall and Lindzey and Fadiman and Frager texts have helped recognize traditional non-Western perspectives on a par with contemporary Western theories of personality.

In the field of the theories of personality, there is little discussion of, let alone agreement on, the criteria for recognizing a certain perspective as a legitimate theory of personality. There is no set formula specifying what issues a theory of personality must cover or on how they should be dealt with. No author seems to fabricate a theory to fit such specifications. Textbook authors often select particular perspectives or authors without explaining their criteria for selection; they anoint specific theories by including them in one edition of their text and depose others without much of an explanation for doing so. Ironically, in order to be recognized as a personality theorist, an author need not speak of something called personality; indeed, B. F. Skinner, the staunchest opponent of the concepts of person and personality, is widely recognized as a personality theorist. Nevertheless, there seems to be some method in this apparent madness. The key point that makes

sense, it seems to me, is Hall and Lindzey's expression that theories of personality are basically "conceptions of man [*sic*]" (1957, p. 1). What seems to matter the most is whether or not a given perspective appeals to a textbook author as a distinctive viewpoint about issues that matter to him or her. Regardless of the differing definitions of personality, sets of ideas that have come to be recognized as theories of personality are basically conceptual models that account for the nature of individual human beings. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1995a, 1998), many contemporary theories of personality in fact deal with personality only as a matter of individual differences, ignoring personhood as a matter of individuals being held responsible for their actions. Yet, there is no fixed boundary between the connotations of the terms *person* and *personality*, and the term, *theories of personality*, as currently used has a broad enough connotation to accommodate the concerns of both personhood and personality. For the purpose of the present work, the focus is on issues of personhood and not on personality as explained in the previous chapter.

In principle, there is no limit to the number of personality theories that already exist somewhere on this planet or those that might appear in the future. It is commonly accepted in psychology today that each individual tends to construct his or her own implicit personality theory—a set of usually implicit assumptions regarding why people behave the way they do (see Schneider, 1973, for a review of the extensive literature on this topic). Implicit theories of personality serve to inform our understanding of our own and others' behavior and to guide our daily interaction with others. As noted in Chapter 1, the cognitive constructionist perspective suggests that it is natural for human beings to construct and continually revise their own views of the world and of themselves within its context. An implicit personality theory is simply part of an individual's ongoing cognitive construction. As social constructionists have repeatedly pointed out, communities tend to share constructions of reality that help guide their collective life; the Christian, Buddhist, Marxist, Freudian, and other such views of human nature are instances of constructions shared widely in different cultures. Further, the principle of constructive alternativism suggests that it is always possible to construct an unlimited number of alternative perspectives that offer differing interpretations of the same set of phenomena. This does not mean, of course, that any construction of human nature will be valid, workable, or fit the bill as a theory of personality. Given the lack of consensus or clarity on criteria for the acceptability of a given perspective as a theory of personality, let me suggest a few criteria of my own in view of considering the Eriksonian and Advaitic views within the framework that we might call theories of personality.

If a theory of personality is to be recognized as such, it must obviously be *explicit*, for no implicit theory can be recognized, studied, or applied, no matter how rich or effective it might be. Also, a theory must be reasonably *comprehensive*; theories that account for only selected aspects of persons without attempting to

cover the whole person in some way or another cannot qualify as theories of personality. The fact that Piagetian theory is well recognized as a theory of cognitive development but not as a theory of personality illustrates the need for comprehensiveness. By comparison, Erikson's theory counts as not only a theory of human development but also as a theory of personality owing to its comprehensiveness. Views of human nature that we find in major literary works such as Shakespeare's plays or the epic Mahābhārata are comprehensive as well as rich, complex, and highly insightful. Yet they do not quality as theories of personality since they are not formally presented as such. It is of course possible to derive a formal statement of a theory based on a body of literature in which it is voiced. Indeed, this is just what most writers of textbooks of theories of personality do: they go through numerous writings of various promising authors and prepare summaries of the ideas in a format they consider appropriate for a theory of personality. The success of textbook writers such as Hall and Lindzey lies in their ability to produce systematic, coherent, concise, and authentic accounts of theories based on sets of writings. Someone like Goleman, who prepared for the third edition of Hall and Lindzey a summary of the Buddhist theory of personality based on Abhidhamma texts, must translate, summarize, and *interpret* the original ideas in the language, idiom, style, and thematic format considered appropriate for contemporary Western theories of personality. In addition to being stated in a formal way, the principal propositions and claims of a personality theory must be in principle *verifiable* or falsifiable in observation or experience. In addition, the theory should have at least potential *applications*, if not already existing applications with demonstrated efficacy. The most common applications of personality theories are therapeutic, by which I mean that they are effective ways of bringing about a change in a person from a less desirable to a more desirable condition. While some theories might focus on the removal of pathology, others might take an average or "normal" individual to higher levels of "positive mental health," accomplishment, fulfillment, happiness, self-actualization, self-realization, or other forms of desirable human condition (Coan, 1977).

It is my contention that the Advaita Vedānta system offers a theory of personhood that satisfies all the criteria just suggested. Moreover, in an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1988), I have presented a brief but formal statement of a theory of personality derived from the principles of the Advaita Vedānta system. I have prepared this statement in the language, idiom, and format compatible with contemporary textbooks of theories of personality. Stated this way, the Advaita Vedānta approach to personhood is meaningfully comparable with the Eriksonian or other theories of personality. In the following pages of this chapter, I shall present the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedānta viewpoints in a format that, in my view, is compatible with contemporary theories of personality; however, in keeping with the topic of this volume, my focus will be on the concepts of person, self, and identity and not on individual differences, conceptions of psychopathology, and other such topics that are usually included in common accounts of personality theories.

Erik H. Erikson's Views of Person, Self, and Identity

Erikson's theory of personality and identity formation evolved over nearly half a century of his productive career. In addition to numerous publications of his own, many secondary sources, particularly short interpretive summaries of his theories in textbooks, are widely available. The purpose of the present summary is not simply to add to these plentiful sources; it is to provide a convenient basis for meaningful cross-cultural comparison of perspectives on person, self, and identity. As such, the following summary is selective; it is deliberately slanted to bring about contrasts as well as complementarities in the cross-cultural context. Readers familiar with Eriksonian model might wish to skip the summary and go straight on to the critique.

Intellectual Background of Erikson's Theory[3]

Erik Erikson was born in Germany in 1902, and was trained as a psychoanalyst in Sigmund Freud's clinic by Freud's daughter Anna. Early in his career as a psychoanalyst, Erikson was deeply influenced by the psychoanalytic ego psychology of Anna Freud, Ernst Kris, Heinz Hartmann, R. M. Loewenstein, and others. The main point of departure of the ego psychology from the Freudian model was that they did not accept Freud's portrayal of the ego as perpetually involved in a conflict with the unruly id on one side and a repressive superego on the other. Hartmann (1939/1958) conceived of a "conflict-free sphere" of an autonomous ego empowered by the capacities for physical movement, perception, and memory. In one of his latest works, Erikson (1982) approvingly quotes Hartmann on this issue (p. 19), and recognizes an expanded sphere of the ego's autonomy by granting it the "capacity for accurate and conceptual interplay with the factual world" (p.76). The significance of these changes in the psychoanalytic movement is that Erikson would consider human beings as persons responsible for what they do, rather than treat them as helpless creatures determined by biological and social forces.

Erikson is widely recognized for developing a theory of psychosocial development that parallels Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Erikson (1982, p.76) makes it clear that he and Piaget were not only well aware of each other's work, but also that both saw no contradiction between their stagewise accounts of human development. In many of his works, Erikson credits several senior and

contemporary authors whose ideas helped shape his evolving perspective over the decades. Prominent among such influences are Henry Murray's personological approach and his emphasis on studying "life histories rather than case histories"; William James's work on the self as mentioned before; ethnographic observations of childhood in aboriginal peoples of America (with Scudder Mekeel); anthropological perspectives of Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others, leading to a cross-cultural outlook on a global scale; perspectives on history of such historians as R. G. Collingwood, whom he occasionally quotes; and some basic ideas in biology, such as C. H. Stockard's formulation of the concept of epigenesis and Konrad Lorenz's idea of "ritualization," along with his ecological perspective in general. As a result of selective "borrowing" from such diverse sources, Erikson's theory offers an interdisciplinary perspective rarely matched in breadth and richness by competing theories of personality. Besides this, extensive clinical experience, combined with originality strong enough to ignore the fashionable demands for measurement and constricting methodology, have made Erikson's work quite unique in contemporary psychology. The fact that he has explicitly stated the foundational ideas makes it easy to see how his theory follows from its axiomatic assumptions.

Conceptual Foundations of Erikson's Perspective

Erikson (1968) beings his theorizing with the explicit statement of the following basic assumption: "Man is, at one and the same time, part of a somatic order of things, as well a personal and social one" (p. 289). The *somatic* order is said to involve the "body self" in which biological processes operate to bring about a hierarchical organization of organ systems. The *personal* order involves the sphere of the "psyche," where psychic processes organize individual experience to bring about "ego synthesis." In the third order, called the *polis* in earlier formulations and the *ethos* in later ones, communal processes were said to bring about a cultural organization of the interdependence of persons (Erikson, 1982, pp. 25–26). These orders are not supposed to be separate and mutually exclusive domains, but mutually interpenetrating spheres of a common reality (1982, pp. 88–90). Identities of persons are said to be "situated" in the three orders in which they live at all times (1975, p.46), and processes therein are considered mutually complementary. The orderliness brought about in each component of reality is not expected to be perfect at all times; Erikson considers bodily *tension*, individual *anxiety*, and social *panic* as indicators of the failure in bringing about order in the three spheres. It is my impression that, from the Eriksonian point of view, to think of human beings is to think of them in terms of the three "orders"; it is as if each person is simultaneously, necessarily, and always part of three levels of reality, and that consideration of a person is incomplete without an account of any of the three.

As a psychoanalyst Erikson takes for granted the Freudian trilogy of the id,

ego, and superego, and also accepts many basic principles of the Freudian theory, such as the stages of psychosexual development, the importance of repression and other defense mechanisms of the ego, the pervasiveness of anxiety in the human condition, and the role of the Oedipus complex in character formation, to mention a few. Like many other neo-Freudians, Erikson tries to advance the Freudian model so as to systematically include the *social* aspects of personality. However, unlike some other neo-Freudians, he does not wish to gratuitously include the social aspects in his account; Erikson treats them as central. Erikson's main task was to extend the Freudian model of psychosexual development to a psychosocial one, and to cover the complete life cycle rather than limiting it up to the development of genitality at adolescence. The basic concept on which he bases his developmental model is the biological principle of *epigenesis*. This principle, derived from embryological studies, suggests that the development of the fetal organs proceeds by progressive differentiation of body tissues, such that particular organs (heart, lungs, eyes, etc.) arise stage by stage according to a predetermined plan specific to the species. At each stage new structures arise under critical conditions of optimum readiness of the internal and external factors. Since specific structures such as the arteries and veins must already be in place for the functioning of new ones like the heart, a delay or deficiency in the previous stage often disrupts the coordinated growth of other parts, and adversely affects the healthy growth of the organism as a whole.

Although the biological principle of epigenesis deals primarily with the development of organs in the uterus, Erikson extends this principle, by analogy, to suggest a stage-by-stage maturation of physical, cognitive, and social capacities during childhood and of overall personality development throughout the life cycle. Thus, the maturational processes lead to the development of sensory and motor capacitites according to a sequential plan, so that the individual becomes ready to become aware of, to be driven toward, and to interact with a social sphere of widening radius, starting from the "mothering" individual in early infancy and extending to humanity by adolescence (Erikson, 1959, p. 52). On the basis of cross-cultural observations. Erikson suggests that societies tend to develop patterns of customs that invite and encourage the developing capacities in a matching sequence. Thus, for instance, different cultures have developed differing customs such as toilet training practices and rites of passage to adulthood that roughly match nature's timetable for the maturation of capacities to control eliminative functions and to procreate, and so on. Social customs connected with the human life cycle typically present growing individuals with sets of "developmental tasks" appropriate to various stages. As pointed out by David Rapaport (1959, p. 15), the theory conceives of the sequence of epigenetic phases as universal, although the typical developmental tasks and their solutions differ from culture to culture. While the successful completion of such tasks contributes to the vitality and health of the person, lack of success results in a deficiency.

The Eight Stages of Psychosocial Development

The particular number of stages of human development proposed in the Eriksonian model may not be seen as sacred or absolute, but one that offers a convenient division of the life cycle into what are suggested as the most important aspects of the human life cycle. Indeed, Erikson has always presented his ideas as evolving and open to change from the beginning to its latest formulation. Each stage is viewed as a *critical period* or a turning point crucial for the development of particular aspects of personality within an "average expectable environment." Although specific environmental supports are important for the healthy growth at each stage, it is possible for alternate supports available during the same period to compensate for a missing crucial support—a surrogate for an absentee mother in the first stage, for instance. In addition to such contemporaneous or "horizontal" compensation, it is considered possible for there to be a later or "longitudinal" compensation for deficits in an earlier stage.

Depending on his or her relative success in accomplishing the stage-specific developmental tasks, a growing individual may develop a *sense* of (1) trust versus mistrust, (2) autonomy versus shame, (3) initiative versus guilt, (4) industry versus inferiority, (5) identity versus role confusion, (6) intimacy versus isolation, (7) generativity versus stagnation, and (8) integrity versus despair. The sense of trust, autonomy, and so forth involves largely preconscious and pervasive *attitudes*, which manifest in experience and in behavior. The terms characterizing the outcome in all stages are bipolar, suggesting the mutually oppositional or dialectical nature of the processes involved. However, the outcome at each stage is not an either/or affair. Although the poles mentioned in the second place in the eight pairs of terms imply negative outcomes, they are not necessarily undesirable. Indeed, certain degrees of mistrust, shame, guilt, and so on are not only natural outcomes of development but also desirable. The lack of an ability to mistrust dangerous characters would make a person vulnerable, for instance, and the lack of shame and guilt would imply, respectively, shamelessness and psychopathy. Thus, one must have a sense of both trust and mistrust and so on; Erikson considers a *favorable ratio* of positive over negative senses to be the optimum condition for the growth of a healthy personality.

Stage 1: Basic Trust versus Mistrust

During this initial stage extending over the first year or two, the human infant is entirely dependent on the mother and/or surrogate caregivers. Prior to birth, the offspring is physically a part of the mother, and the mutual symbiotic relation between the mother's and baby's bodies must undergo a gradual but radical transformation, leading to the eventual independence of the child. In Erikson's view, it is most important for us to recognize the *mutuality* of the mother–child relationship. Erikson (1982) traces the development of the "I" in the mutuality of

the recognition of the infant and the mother by face and by name; it is here that we must place the "dimmest affirmation of the ... polarity of the 'I' and 'Other' " (pp. 44–45). Indeed, it is difficult to describe the quality of self-awareness in this primal stage; Erikson (1982) characterizes it by terms like "numinous" and as having "the aura of a hallowed presence." "The numinous assures us, ever again," he says, "of *separateness transcended* and yet also of *distinctness confirmed*, and thus of the very basis of a sense of 'I' " (p. 45; emphasis original).

It should be obvious that according to Erikson, separateness and distinctness from the "other" is a prerequisite of selfhood. But given the symbiotic existence of the fetus as part and parcel of the mother's body throughout pregnancy, the emergence of separateness must be gradual, and it makes sense that the self-awareness in the newborn baby must be "dim" as Erikson suggests. A parallel observation in Piaget's work may be noted here to clarify the point. In *Construction of Reality in the Child*, Piaget (1954, p. 3) points out that, in the first weeks of life, the child's universe is not cut up into separate permanent objects external to the self. The baby must begin to differentiate the toy from his own hand holding it; he must realize that biting one or the other has very different consequences. Piaget's observations show that it is not until the second half of the first year that babies begin to actively search for missing objects such as a toy, a behavior that indicates their recognition of "object permanence," i.e., implicit awareness of the continued existence of objects. Piaget's studies show how the child "constructs" the notion of permanent objects in her or his world, including the recognition of one's own body as an entity separate from other objects, such as a toy held in her or his own hand. For Erikson, it is the recognition of persons and the emotional responses to them that are more crucial than the cognition of physical objects as studied by Piaget.

The sense of trust, which Erikson considers to be the most crucial developmental gain of the first 2 years of life, is described as the experience of "being at home" with the world and being prepared to count on people and be counted on in return by others. A favorable balance of trust over mistrust is expected to result from the quality of care by the mother or her surrogate rather than the quantity of food supplied. Providing timely help, such as food when the baby is hungry and diaper change when wet, creates in the infant a sense that she is in a safe place, a sense that lays the foundation of hope and leads to a religious faith or belief in the cosmic order. Insofar as the infant in the first year or so remains primarily a recipient of food and care, Erikson (1959) characterizes the selfhood as being implicitly crystallized on the notion: "I am what I am given" (p. 82).

Stage 2: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt

The second stage of development corresponds roughly to the second and third years of life. During this period the muscles of the child develop so as to enable the child to exercise control on the body's eliminative functions and to walk and run

with increasing ease. During this period, the society expects the child to be toilet trained, although the toilet training practices vary from culture to culture, as documented by numerous anthropological studies. A child who cannot control him- or herself is commonly made to feel ashamed by parents and other significant elders. Shaming is a common method of social control exercised in most societies of the world. It is a preliminary socialization device that attempts to instill self-control in the growing individual, and it makes sense that it should coincide with the timing of maturation of the musculature and the concomitant development of individual autonomy. It also makes sense that the awareness of guilt, which works as a signal for avoiding a proscribed action built-in at a deeper level than shame, is the next one to develop. Insofar as the sense of autonomy implies the beginning of willful action, Erikson (1959) recognizes *will* as a basic strength that develops during the stage, and characterizes the selfhood implicit at this level in the words, "I am what I will" (p. 82).

Stage 3: Initiative versus Guilt

The third stage in the Eriksonian model corresponds with the preschool years. It is marked by the development of cognitive capacities, the use of language, and imagination. Children at this age develop a keen interest in play and naturally engage in make-believe. They begin to recognize the repetitive actions of men and women in uniforms—the mail carriers, firemen, nurses, and so on—and often imitate their visibly routine activities in make-believe. Following G. H. Mead, Erikson recognizes the recognition and anticipation of social roles as an important aspect of socialization of children at this stage. During this stage the self begins to develop by way of a temporary identification in imagination and play with a variety of social roles in their rudimentary forms. The growing capacity for imagination reflects children's interest in stories. Most societies tend to capitalize on this interest in conveying their cultural ideals by telling stories of their heroes and demons, the good guys and the bad guys.

The exposure to cultural ideals through stories also coincides with the learning of do's and don'ts in daily behavior. The child must now refrain from taking away or "stealing" toys belonging to other children, must not cheat, and must face increasingly strong punishments for breaking the more important rules of conduct. The child's social sphere is now broadened to include the father, the traditional disciplinarian in many societies, thus creating the Oedipal situation of classical psychoanalysis. Erikson accepts much of the Freudian account of the Oedipus complex, which need not be repeated here. Suffice it to note that, from a developmental perspective, selfhood at this stage is characterized in terms of the emergence of the ego-ideal and conscience, which together constitute the super-ego. Involved in the process is the *identification* of the child with the image of the parent of the same sex. Identification implies investing the same-sex parent with libidinal energy or strong positive *affect*. According to Erikson, it is such childhood identifications that form the basis of the sense of identity that emerges in adolescence. As far as the preschool child is concerned, the maturation of the child's capacity for imagination allows for the developing personality to crystallize around an implicit conviction that "I am what I can imagine I will be" (Erikson, 1959, p. 82). At any rate, the preschool child has acquired much more than the mere physical autonomy characteristic of the previous stage. "[H]e is in the free possession of a certain surplus energy to forget failures quickly and to approach what seems desirable (even if it also feels dangerous) with undiminished and better aimed effort" (Erikson, 1959, p. 75). Thus, children at this stage manifest a sense of initiative of their own. But this is also the time for the society to ensure that all the bubbling energy be channeled according to its norms. The sense of initiative must therefore by balanced by an appropriate sense of guilt that would arise if and when the moral code is violated, or else we would have a misdirected member of the society to contend with. Thus, the child must acquire both a sense of initiative as well as a sense of guilt.

Stage 4: Industry versus Inferiority

Stage 4 in the Eriksonian model corresponds with the school years prior to puberty. According to Freud, this is the period of *latency* in psychosexual development—a temporary lull in the development of the sexual urge—which comes after the initial expression of sexual development in the form of interest in genitals and their manipulation during the Oedipal stage and prior to the hormonal changes of puberty. According to Erikson, the latency period allows for the diversion of libidinal energy from sexuality so as to enable the child to concentrate on learning at school. While the literate societies expect the schoolage children to master reading, writing, and arithmetic, the nonliterate societies teach the rudiments of technology that the child would need to survive in the ecological niche of the tribe. In any case, all societies must ensure that during childhood, each member must prepare to participate in its world of work and fulfill his or her economic function. With its typical emphasis on social factors, the Eriksonian model emphasizes that the child must learn to work together with others and work well. Each society tends to set up its own reward structures to encourage good work, and children ostensibly get recognition commensurate with the quality of their work. Such recognition forms the basis for the sense of industry, which is the significant developmental gain of this stage. The lack of adequate performance and/or recognition would lead to a sense of inferiority, and a consequent lack of adequate self-esteem.

Stage 5: Identity versus Role Confusion

This is the stage that Erikson has described in greater detail than any other stage in his model, and it will also be the most important for our purpose, owing to

our focus on the identity issue. It is important to remember that Erikson's model conceives of the person as simultaneously being part of three orders: the biological, the psychological, and the social. Working within this framework, Erikson characterizes the psychological account of the fifth stage of development in terms of the experience and behavior of individuals as they try to cope with the profound biological changes of puberty on the one hand and the social transformation of the dependent child into an independent adult on the other. When the social aspect of adolescent development is viewed in the cross-cultural context, it is recognized that there is a great degree of variation in the patterns of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood in different cultures. In the so-called "primitive" cultures where the technology is not very advanced, there are only a few occupational categories and little if any choice of alternative lifestyles. Children are usually trained in traditional crafts within the family by the time they reach puberty, and boys and girls are ready to become full-fledged "adults"—meaning *persons* with rights and responsibilities to work, get married, and procreate just like their elders. In such societies, it is common to hold rites of passage at puberty or very soon thereafter to announce and celebrate the youths' entry into the adult world. With the advancement of technology, occupational categories are multiplied, the period of training is prolonged well beyond pubertal age, and childlike dependence on parents increases as a result, and a new stage of development, which we call "adolescence," originates as a wedge between two equally ambiguously defined stages called "childhood" and "adulthood." Erikson conceives of a set of developmental tasks characteristic of this middle stage of life in the relatively complex societies of our time.

The typical major developmental tasks[4] of the fifth stage of the Eriksonian model are: coping with pubertal changes in the body and the resulting strong sexual drive; finding companion(s) in love and/or marriage; choosing a career that is both feasible and yet challenging, and is consistent with one's favored capacities on the one hand and with available opportunities on the other; acquiring training in line with one's chosen career path; finding a "meaning" in life, either by uncritically accepting parental values or by choosing from the variety of ideologies, beliefs, and values to which one has been exposed; finding a "niche" in society that is consistent with one's predilections, and doing so with or without the support of parents and other significant elders. To put it briefly, the main challenge of late adolescence and early adulthood is developing a satisfactory *psychosocial self-definition*. This does not of course mean that one has to generate a new selfhood all at once; the vaguely defined period of adolescence, relatively short or long depending on the social and individual circumstances, is to be used to fabricate an enduring sense of selfhood or psychosocial identity with the help of several elements accumulated throughout the preadolescent period. Among such accrued elements we may count the following: a name assigned and place of belonging ascribed by the family in which one was born and raised; self-images generally fashioned after the same-sex parent and other significant adults; strong feelings of

identification with such images; occupational roles recognized and crudely imitated in childhood play; and so on. Indeed, Erikson (1959) points out that the roots of the development of selfhood, which he characterizes as the process of *identity formation*, "go back all the way to the first self-recognition: in the baby's earliest of smiles" (p. 113). Moreover, he says that "While the end of adolescence ... is the stage of identity *crisis*, identity *formation* neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is a lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society" (p. 113; emphasis original).

If identity formation is a lifelong process, why does adolescence prove to be its critical turning point? This is because the child can no longer feel sure about the "tentative crystallizations" of selfhood, which fall "prey to the discontinuities of psychosocial development" (Erikson, 1959, p. 114). Some of the discontinuities might be imposed internally, i.e., by biological processes of maturation leading to "changes in quality and quantity of drive" and "expansions in mental equipment" (1959, p. 115). Other discontinuities may be imposed by external factors, such as new and conflicting social expectations. In support of this point, Erikson refers to a seminal paper by the anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1938). In it she points out that while customs in some cultures allow a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood, others impose an abrupt transition, for example, by having to learn strong inhibition of sexual urges prior to marriage and then by expecting their full expression on the first night of the honeymoon. To put the point in the light of our discussion of the concept of identity in the last chapter, it is rapid and radical change threatening an inner sense of selfsameness that makes adolescence a critical period in identity formation.

The growth and transition during adolescence also brings about an enrichment and diversity in the internal and external environment, thereby threatening the individual's sense of unity. The inner world of the adolescent includes sexual drives of a newer quality and greater strength than ever before, fully grown muscular strength and intellectual capacities, the capacity to better understand ideas, a great diversity of lifestyles recognized in the surrounding society, new roles available and corresponding selves anticipated, and so on. One cannot just keep on adding new elements to one's sense of the self: many old elements, such as childhood dreams, need to be discarded; selves, such as "mommy's little boy," must be abandoned; and new elements must be meaningfully integrated into a single functioning whole. To put it in terms of the concept of identity discussed in the previous chapter, what Erikson means by identity is the maintenance of unity among the multiplicity of selves, and a sense of sameness in the midst of inner and outer change. How is the unification of multiple selves and a sense of sameness attained? Erikson ascribes the attainment of unity and sameness to the "synthetic function of the ego," a concept traced back to the work of the psychoanalyst H. Nunberg (1931). Says Erikson (1968): "The ego, if understood as a central and partially unconscious organizing agency, must at any given stage of life deal with

a changing Self which demands to be synthesized with abandoned and anticipated selves" (p. 211).

The unification of self-images and other contents of the psyche from within is not enough for successful identity formation; in addition to being integrated from within, the individual as a unit must be integrated into the social order of his or her community. During late adolescence, when young persons are about to step out of the sanctuary of parental protection into the world of work and the community at large, they are keen to find a niche in some section of the society, "a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made" for themselves. "In finding it," says Erikson (1959), "the young adult gains an assured sense of inner continuity and social sameness which will bridge what he was as a child and what he is about to become, and will reconcile his conception of himself and his community's recognition of him.... [S]uch recognition provides an entirely indispensable support to the ego in the specific tasks of adolescing ..." (p. 111). The adults who recognize the youth's potential may be parents, teachers, employers, or community leaders, and may "recognize" him or her by either actually granting a suitable position in the occupational or community structure, or by merely offering their blessings. In the highly complex societies of our times, the world that the youth are ready to enter offers a bewilderingly wide array of alternatives in terms of occupation, sexuality, religion, ideology, and lifestyles. That does not mean that young persons are absolutely free to become whatever they want; the degrees of freedom vary greatly from society to society, depending on factors such as race, class, gender, economic conditions, current social policies, and so on. Writing against the backdrop of the American society, the Erikson suggests that the development of a healthy personality depends on "a certain degree of *choice*, a certain hope for an individual *chance*, and a certain conviction in freedom of *self-determination*" (1959, p. 93). He also suggests that the process of identity formation becomes problematic as the diversity and range of possibilities increase (see Erikson, 1963/1965, p. 13).

There are several intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional factors that Erikson identifies as important for the identity formation process. One of the important intrapersonal factors he emphasizes is the cognitive development during the middle teens. In this context he refers explicitly to Jean Piaget's account of the achievement of "formal operations," whereby "the youth can operate on hypothetical propositions, can think of possible variables and potential relations, and think of them in thought alone, independent of concrete checks previously necessary" (Erikson, 1968, p. 245). The relevance of this level of cognitive ability for the identity formation process is that the youth can "conjure up systematically the full range of alternative possibilities that could exist at any given time" (1968, p. 245).[5] This means that those adolescents who do in fact develop the full capabilities of formal operations (and we know that not all do) can imaginatively link their present with a hypothetical future they construe or "conjure up" for

themselves.[6] But the path from the present to the future cannot be chalked out alone and without a meaningful perspective on the future. This is where the role of ideologies enters in the identity formation process. Institutionalized ideologies, as organized sets of collectively shared beliefs and values, provide valuable support for budding identities in a number of different ways.

The primary function of an ideology is to provide a coherent perspective on life, of the world around and of one's place within it (Erikson, 1959, pp. 156–159; 1968, pp. 187–188). This is true of most forms of ideology, whether explicit or implicit, ambitious or cynical, religious or political, whether borrowed like a "package deal" from a particular book, leader, or institute, or assembled from individually chosen elements and forged into a unique configuration. At an intrapsychic level, an ideology provides a valuable aid to what Erikson calls "ego synthesis," meaning, in particular, the integration of perspectives on the past and future selves. This is because ideologies tend to provide a set of values and to help in ordering priorities and fashion a hierarchy of roles, so that one is not pulled in different directions by conflicting role demands. Also, the ideological leaders often provide a valuable interpersonal link between the individual and the community at large. In some cases, a leader serves as a father figure, thus assisting in resolving deep-seated Oedipal conflicts during a period in which the young person is growing out of the confines of the family of origin and is struggling to come to terms with his relationship with authority.[7] The leaders, in turn, may fulfill their own needs for nurturing the younger generation during the late adult stage of their life cycle.

As a shared set of values and goals, ideologies provide the most significant link between the individual and the group. While individuals derive a sense of belongingness, solidarity, and collective security by identifying themselves with the group's ideology, the groups, in turn, harness the individual's constructive and destructive capacities in the service of collective goals. Ideologies also offer perspectives on a collective future, whether conceived of as a utopia on earth, a kingdom in heaven, or an Armageddon. Such visions of the future, even the misguided or delusional ones, provide individuals with a perspective on an uncharted future and a structured life plan. A course of action based on a promised collective future tends to provide a sense of durability when facing changes of the type that may have challenged the adolescent's sense of selfsameness. Before launching a course of action, the youth must feel that it is worthy of wagering the whole of his or her life, and an ideology provides a justification for a plan of action and ensures the youth's fidelity to the cause (Erikson, 1963/1965).

If a youth is to offer her or his very best for a cause and be ready either to toil in anonymity for life or to die as a martyr in a moment, then it better be the best cause possible, for nobody would want to waste her or his energies for a worthless cause. And there is usually no shortage of groups and leaders ready to convince potential followers that theirs is the best cause to live or die for. Erikson has

repeatedly noted in his writings that humanity is divided into innumerable segments, each claiming to pursue the greatest cause of earth. He has coined the term *pseudospeciation* to designate the division of humankind into separate species, as it were, each claiming to be a special kind—whether by virtue of past glory, some God-given privilege, or moral superiority by virtue of following the most justifiable cause imaginable. Some members of the pseudospecies tend to embrace totalistic ideologies that simplistically define good and bad in black-and-white terms, and divide communities sharply between defenders of the faith versus their enemies who fit to be annihilated like a species of prey destroyed by its natural predators. Adolescents who have just begun to recognize the moral relativity by virtue of their newly acquired cognitive capacity for "formal operations" sometimes feel overwhelmed by the task of having to choose among a large variety of competing conceptions of value. For such adolescents, totalistic ideologies offer a quick solution by sharply defining good and bad and by promising rewards either in the form of an ultimate victory or else the glory of martyrdom. We shall return to the cognitive implications of totalism in Chapter 4, on self-as-knower. Here, let us simply note that ideologies, whether totalistic or tolerant, explicit or implicit, assist in the central task of adolescence, namely, the attainment of a satisfactory psychosocial self-definition. Indeed, Erikson (1959) sees the role of ideology to be so important in identity formation that he considers identity and ideology to be "two aspects of the same process" (p. 157).

To be able to attain a satisfactory self-definition, a young person must make "a series of ever-narrowing selections of personal, occupational, sexual, and ideological *commitments*" (Erikson, 1963/1965, p. 13, emphasis added). Obviously, such a task requires time, and it is quite common for many people to explore several alternatives before arriving at lifelong commitments. In many instances, the initial choices are often accompanied by such strong feelings of sincerity and purpose that choices appear irreversible. However, what is accepted initially as a commitment for life turns out in the long run to be tentative. Many a youth adopts values, roles, relationships, and lifestyles so as to try them on for size, so to speak, i.e., with an implicit spirit of "free role experimentation." Often such experimentation is undertaken with a playful provocativeness—deliberately choosing what parents and other significant adults might dislike or prohibit. The adults, on the other hand, often tend to be permissive despite verbally denouncing the youths' undertakings. Indeed, the adult society tends to not only allow the young person to postpone typical "adult commitments," such as getting married or settling in a career, but directly or indirectly provides support for the prolongation of the stage of "adolescence." Erikson has used the term *psychosocial moratorium* to designate situations where the society tends to permit the prolongation of adolescence through free role experimentation on the part of the youth. With the help of such a moratorium, the growing individual is able to develop a "sense of identity."

The concepts of *identity* and *identity formation* are at the core of Erikson's

theory of personality. However, he does not give a precise definition of the term identity. Instead, he attempts to "make the subject matter of identity more explicit by approaching it from a variety of angles—biographic, pathographic, and theoretical; and by letting the term identity speak for itself in a number of connotations" (Erikson, 1959, p. 102). Having said this, Erikson goes on to assign the term identity a set of related connotations such as a "conscious sense of *individual identity*," "striving for a *continuity of personal character*," "a criterion for the silent doings of *ego synthesis*," and finally, "maintenance of an inner *solidarity* with a group's ideals and identity" (1959, p. 102; emphasis original). Of the process of identity formation, he provides the following account:

> From a genetic point of view ... the process of identity formation emerges as an *evolving configuration*–a configuration which is gradually established by successive ego syntheses and resyntheses throughout childhood; it is a configuration gradually integrating *constitutional givens, idiosyncratic libidinal needs, favored capacities, significant identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations*, and *consistent roles*. (Erikson, 1959, p. 116; emphasis original)

It is best to describe the concept of sense of identity, which describes the gains that accrue to an individual upon completion of the stage-specific tasks of adolescence, in Erikson's own words:

> An increasing sense of identity ... is experienced preconsciously as a sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are a feeling of being at home with one's body, a sense of "knowing where one is going," and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count. Such a sense of identity, however, is never gained nor maintained once and for all. Like a "good conscience," it is constantly lost and regained, although more lasting and more economical methods of maintenance and restoration are evolved and fortified in late adolescence. (Erikson, 1959, p. 118)

To put it differently, the successful completion of the developmental tasks of adolescence should lead to the crystallization of one's selfhood such that the youth could say with confidence, "This is where I belong," or "I am what I stand for."

As can be expected, individuals differ greatly in the ways in which they meet the challenges of youth, in the degree of success they attain, and the amount of time taken to complete the tasks. Some individuals express great difficulties in arriving at a satisfactory sense of identity and experience its antithesis, a condition that Erikson has labeled *role confusion*. In extreme instances, the difficulties in accomplishing a sense of identity manifest in the form of a variety of relatively mild or severe symptoms such as: inability to concentrate on work at hand; inability to derive a sense of efficacy, often despite success in doing what one is expected to do; difficulty in starting or finishing work on time, and a general difficulty in coping with time; a feeling that life is just happening to oneself, rather than being lived by one's own initiative; "fluctuations in ego-strength," meaning occasionally feeling great, while sometimes feeling worthless; and "work paralysis," meaning sheer inability to get anything accomplished and feeling that life

has come to a standstill. A condition involving several such symptoms has been called the state of *identity crisis*. Erikson has offered a composite sketch of the state of identity crisis on the basis of his observations of a number of borderline cases encountered in his clinical practice and a number of biographical and autobiographical accounts. He has noted that it is extremely rare to find an ensemble of most of the typical symptoms described above in a single case. He also has warned that, despite its apparent similarity with a neurotic syndrome, identity crisis is not a "nosological category," i.e., a medical term designating a form of disease. It is not an affliction or a pathology leading to a wastage of energy, but is rather a "normative crisis," i.e., a normal period of difficulty with heightened potential for growth, like the apparently pathological but normal period of teething in infancy, for instance.

Stage 6: Intimacy versus Isolation

As the years of adolescence pass, one arrives at adulthood with or without an adequate sense of identity. During early adulthood, most individuals' major concern shifts to the development and maintenance of intimate relationships in love and work. Being separate from others and yet together with them is a hallmark of identity. In intimate encounters and close companionships in love and work that are typical of early adult life, it is often difficult to maintain an optimum distance from the companion. Selfhood, as discovered, defined, and fortified by late adolescence, is now in danger of being fused with or lost in an intimate dyadic bond. The challenge one faces at this stage is therefore what and how much to give in, and what and how much to retain, as one's own and separate territory. According to the Eriksonian model, a favorable balance of the feeling of intimacy with partners in sex, friendship, and work over a sense of isolation from them marks the optimum condition in early adulthood.

Stage 7: Generativity versus Stagnation

During the middle period of adulthood, most individuals shift their major concern to the care of the next generation. It is not simply the chores involved in providing food, comforts, and schooling that matter during this stage; what matters most is the passing of a cultural legacy to the younger generation. In the context of the succession of generations that is critical for this stage, one tends to see oneself in relation to one's forebears on the one hand and one's successors on the other. One might try to assess whether, in comparison with what one received from parents and teachers, one has contributed something more worthwhile to one's children, students, or apprentices at work. If the assessment is positive, the result is a sense of generativity, it implies the satisfaction of having contributed one's fair share to the cultural legacy on behalf of the current generation. However, if the assessment is negative, one might feel stagnation, implying that one has failed to improve upon the cultural legacy of previous generations. In my opinion, the sense of selfhood may be crystallized at this stage in saying: "I am what I have and care to pass on to the next generation."

Stage 8: Integrity versus Despair

The eighth and last stage in the Eriksonian model coincides with old age. It is the time for taking stock of the entire life cycle toward its completion. If I have accomplished becoming what I think I should have become, then I would have a sense of integrity; if not, I would feel a sense of despair. According to Erikson (1968), toward the end of life one's sense of identity might be expressed in the words, "I am what survives of me" (p. 141).

The Varied Critiques of Erikson's Theory

Over the nearly half century that Erikson's work evolved, his ideas gained wide popularity and attracted a multitude of followers as well as critics. There have been several attempts to examine, extend, test, as well as criticize various aspects of his work. It is neither necessary nor possible to explore and assess the varied developments inspired and critiques evoked by Erikson's writings on various related fields such as human development, psychohistory, and so on. However, it is necessary to indicate the kind of support as well as critiques that are relevant to the present context. One of the major concerns of contemporary psychology is whether his concept of identity and his theory of identity formation are empirically supported. Foremost in such research conducted over the years for empirically testing Erikson's ideas is the work of James Marcia (1966), who devised a method for the validation of the concept of ego identity status derived from Erikson's theory. It is not necessary to describe this methodology here. Suffice it to note that, with the help of numerous studies using this method in North America as well as in many other parts of the world, Marcia and his many students, colleagues, and others have compiled a considerable amount of data to test various hypotheses derived from Erikson's theory. On the basis of a review of such data, Marcia (1980) concludes that "[t]he utility of the concept of identity in looking at personality development in adolescence has been reasonably well established. It is a construct that can be fairly reliably measured, related to concurrent variables, and to antecedent and consequent conditions" (p. 181).

Marcia's claim has been carefully examined and criticized for various technical shortcomings as well as its overemphasis on the individual and the neglect of social factors (Côté and Levine, 1987). In response to such criticism, Waterman (1988) has defended Marcia's research methodology and the major findings based on it. Regardless of their shortcomings, studies of identity formation by Marcia and

his associates have demonstrated that Erikson's theory is a rich source of hypotheses that can be quantified and empirically tested. Whatever the level of empirical support lent to his theory by current research, as noted by Hall and Lindzey (1978), "[m]uch of what Erikson has written appears to have face validity, that is, it seems to ring true to the average reader" (p. 108). Erikson came to psychology from art, bringing esthetic quality as well as literary merit to his writing, for which he is widely admired. "But," says Ray Holland (1977), "Erikson the artist integrates and unifies his picture, and in the end it is, like many fine works of art, good, but not quite true" (p. 40). I, for one, would settle for the provisional judgment that Erikson's theory holds a promise of validity strong enough to be taken very seriously.

Aside from the descriptive aspects of Erikson's theory, which must be judged in terms of their validity, its prescriptive aspects are open to judgment in terms of a variety of values and ideological positions. His work has been criticized by several feminists (e.g., Millett, 1970/1990; Janeway, 1971) for its sexist bias. The feminist critics have noted, often in an approving tone, that Erikson recognizes not only the unfair treatment women have received in many societies, but also their potential to bring peace on earth. However, they find fault with his view that "anatomy is destiny." Attributing the origin of women's problems to nature rather than to social injustice makes the problems look impossible to correct, thereby diverting attention away from the efforts needed to remove the injustices. As to Erikson's views on many other matters, some authors have criticized Erikson for his conservatism and his support of the societal status quo (e.g., Roazen, 1976, p. 165), while others have taken him to task for being a revisionist and for siding with the radical youth of America (Gutmann, 1974). Such varied evaluations of Erikson's work follow from the critic's background, mandate, values, and purpose.

Erikson's Theory in the Cross-Cultural Context

As noted, Erikson's theory was founded on cross-cultural observations in varied contexts: his experience of living first in Europe and then in the United States, his acquaintance and collaboration with several anthropologists, his early work with American Indians, and his later work in India to study Mahatma Gandhi's life history. Erikson's openness to a variety of cultures stands in contrast with the majority of Western personality theorists, who rarely step beyond the boundaries of the Western civilization, and when they do, they try mainly to obtain data to fit their methodology rather than to start a dialogue with indigeous theories and expand their horizons. Hypotheses based on Eriksonian theory have been tested in a wide variety of cultures,[8] and the results suggest broad, if not universal, applicability of the Eriksonian theory to cultures around the world. Erikson's theory of identity formation has been applied in a wide variety of studies in India: in longitudinal as well as cross-sectional studies of college youth (Kakar & Chowdhry, 1970; Paranjpe, 1975), in clinical work with youth (Ramanujam, 1979), in autobiographical accounts of upper- as well as lower-caste men (Paranjpe, 1975, Ch. 4; Thorat, 1979), investigations of identity issues among women (Paranjpe, 1975, pp. 201–217; Das, 1979), comparative case studies of identity issues in Indian and Japanese youth (Roland, 1988), and in Erikson's own well-known study of Mahatma Gandhi (Erikson, 1969). In my judgment, the upshot of all this work is that the basic concepts of psychosocial identity and identity crisis and the Eriksonian analysis of the process of identity formation are largely applicable to the Indian cultural context, except for details. The case history based on a young man's diaries over a 10-year period reported in my earlier work (Paranjpe, 1975, Ch. 4), in particular, shows that the process of youth's search for identity, the symptoms of identity crisis, and successful resolution of identity crisis by using role experimentation within a psychosocial moratorium match with Erikson's account so well that further questioning about the applicability of his theory becomes a matter of detail rather than of core concepts.

The details where the Eriksonian account of identity formation does not fit well with the Indian context include the following points: that there is no distinct state of adolescence in the Indian society; Indian youth are under greater pressure than Western youth to subordinate individual interests and opinions to those of family and social authorities; and the role of parents in raising children is different than in the West owing to greater influence of uncles and aunts and grandparents, which alters the significance of the Oedipal conflict for character formation. Given the results of its applications in India, Erikson's theory of identity formation holds high promise for wider cross-cultural relevance. Probably the process of identity formation is about the same everywhere, but supports and threats to that process differ from culture to culture and contribute to the alleviation or aggravation of an individual's passage through the life cycle.

Be that as it may, a special aspect of the application of Erikson's theory to the Indian culture is that it has been examined in the light of the traditional indigenous worldview of India by Sudhir Kakar (1979, 1981), who was one of his students, and also by Erikson (1979) himself. I think that such examination is an important aspect in the cross-cultural application of psychological theories; it fits within the Malinowskian dictum that it is important to view the world from the "natives' viewpoint," and it is conspicuously absent in contemporary cross-cultural studies. At any rate, both Kakar and Erikson emphasize (rightly, in my opinion) the relevance of the concepts of *dharma* and *karma* in examining the concept of identity in the context of the traditional Indian worldview. Erikson (1979) has made the following crucial observation in this connection:

> [T]he Hindu life spiral combines *dharma*, the law of the present life, with *karma*, the net balance of good and bad deeds in previous lives, and defines a person's identity as well as his adult goals as aspects of one inescapable truth which unifies rather than contrasts our earthly and our existential identities. (p. 16; emphasis original)

I have already introduced the concepts of *dharma* and *karma* in Chapter 2 in terms of their relevance to the traditional Indian concept of personhood. The fact that Erikson reflects on their relevance is a remarkable indication of the opening of cultural horizons for a psychological theory of Western origin, and prompts further steps in the same direction. In the remainder of this volume, I wish to build on the suggestive implications of Erikson's words quoted above and similar steps taken by Sudhir Kakar. My own inclination is to probe deeper into the ontological, epistemic, and axiological implications that would either ensure, delimit, or deny the convergence of the differing viewpoints. To be able to do so, it is necessary to examine the theoretical foundations of Erikson's work, which, in my opinion, are marked by two rather distinct phases of the development in his account of identity. The first phase is represented by a chapter called the "theoretical interlude" in a book published in the middle stage of his career (Erikson, 1968), and the second phase is reflected in a paper published over a decade later (1981). Let me briefly explain these two phases of his theoretical foundations, along with short interpretive commentaries on both.

Theoretical Interlude: the Earlier Phase

In *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, Erikson (1968) identifies the different concepts of various earlier authors that helped shape his own distinctive approach. "Identity in its vaguest sense suggests," he says, "much of what has been called the self by a variety of workers" (p. 208), specifically mentioning what G. H. Mead called the "self-concept," H. S. Sullivan's "self-system," and "fluctuating self-experience" described by the psychoanalysts P. Schilder and P. Federn. He also explains the connection he had tried to establish in his own work between cognitive and social psychological concepts like self-image and role on the one hand and the Freudian and ego psychoanalytical concepts of the ego-ideal and "ideologies of the super ego" on the other. More specifically, Erikson (1968, p. 209) points out that his work is concerned primarily with the "genetic continuity of such a self-representation, a continuity which must certainly be ascribed to the ego." While the Freudian ego-ideal implies the "ideals of the particular era as absorbed in childhood" (p. 210), his own concern, he says, is about the changing ideals and self-images throughout the life cycle. In this context, he ascribes to the ego the task of selecting, testing, and integrating self-images as they keep changing under the impact of inner and outer changes:

> While the imagery of the ego ideal could be said to represent a set of to-be-striven-for but forever not-quite-attainable ideal goals for the Self, ego identity could be said to be characterized by the actually attained but forever-to-be-revised sense of the reality of the Self within social reality. (Erikson, 1968, pp. 210–211)

It should be clear from the above that "ego identity" as conceptualized by Erikson is suggestive of continuity in the images of selfhood over a series of

continual changes induced in self-images, roles, as well as values and ideals under the impact of inner and outer pressures. How is the sense of continuity attained? It is attained by periodically assessing one's self-images and other elements of selfhood in the light of contemporary challenges (such as successes and failures, new information, opportunities, rewards, and the like), by selectively abandoning those that are no longer serviceable or appealing and by integrating the old and the new one into a renewed vision of selfhood. While a major renewal or this type of an overhaul is said to happen during the "psychosocial moratorium" of youth, Erikson suggested that the sense of identity continues to be revised throughout the life cycle. There is some research in developmental psychology (e.g., Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992) that shows how the process of continual revision and consolidation of the sense of identity continues throughout adulthood in alternating phases of exploration and commitment. According to Erikson (1959), "[t]he sense of ego identity ... is the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity (one's ego in a psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 89). It is important to note here that in Erikson's view, what supports the selfsameness felt by an individual by way of his or her "sense of identity" is primarily an "accrued confidence" in one's ability to convince oneself and significant others that, despite the changes in various aspects of one's self, one has somehow continued to be the same. As long as one can convince oneself—or rationalize—that one is the same person as before, it does not matter if one does not understand what—if anything, for that matter—has remained the same within oneself.

Essentially, Erikson's theory explains how most people cope with ongoing changes in their personhood and how they acquire and maintain a sense—or impression—of having been the same selves despite many obvious changes that take place willy-nilly in the course of life. Such understanding helps identify the more common pitfalls in the development and maintenance of a sense of identity, which in turn can be a basis for guidance, counseling, and therapeutic work. This is fine as far as it goes, but what does Erikson's theory offer in terms of the deeper meanings of self and identity raised in the previous chapter? In keeping with the strategy chosen earlier, the question may be rephrased as follows: *what* does Erikson's theory affirm in regard to self-sameness, on what *grounds*, and to what *consequence*?

In *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, Erikson (1968) insists that his focus is on psychosocial identity, indirectly suggesting that he is not interested in the philosophical questions associated with the concept of identity. Nevertheless, he provides some pointers regarding the deeper implications of his viewpoint. "[T]here is more to man's core than identity," says Erikson, "there is in fact in each individual an 'I,' an observing center of awareness and of volition, which can transcend and must survive the *psycho-social* identity which is our concern in this book" (p. 135). My main comment on this is that, in saying this, Erikson essentially follows the Kantian position insofar as (1) the term *transcend* typically suggests

the Kantian approach in the Western tradition as illustrated in James's usage of the expression the "transcendental ego"; (2) the term *center* is suggestive of the unchanging character attributed to the Kantian Pure Ego; and (3) given the focus on both the *observing* center of awareness and of *volition*, Erikson's approach echoes Kant's double-barreled notion of an unchanging self-as-knower combined with the "*permanence* of the agent" mentioned in the previous chapter.

If this interpretation is correct, then many of James's criticism of the Kantian position hold, *mutatis mutandis*, to Erikson's position as well. First, as in Kant's case, Erikson's position is also ambiguous, since it combines the center of awareness, presumably implying a passive element in the total equation of the whole enterprise of knowing, with an active agent. Second, while in Kant's case the Pure Ego is a mere logical postulate, and hence an unverifiable entity, Erikson's center of awareness is groundless, lacking support not only in the form of verification of any sort but even a single argument. Third, no consequences follow from affirming a center of awareness as suggested by Erikson, as is the case with Kant's postulation of the Pure Ego.

Theoretical Interlude: the Later Phase

What I have called the earlier phase in the development of Erikson's views was completed in 1968, which is about the time of his retirement. Several years later, he started to speak of how and why persons begin to relate to something that transcends their existence in time. The occasion was his "Jefferson Lectures in the Humanities" delivered in 1974, and the topic was the compilation of excerpts from the Bible by Jefferson (1743–1826), the third President of the United States, in his old age. According to Erikson (1974), this compilation

> bespeaks some awareness, on the part of an American president, of the fact that one pole of any identity, in any historical period, relates man to what is forever contemporary, namely, eternity ... [T]his pole of identity ... deals with the awareness of death. We all dimly feel that our transient historical identity is the only chance in all eternity to be alive as somebody in a here and now. We, therefore, dread the possibility, of which we are most aware when deeply young or very old, that at the end we may find that we have lived the wrong life or not really lived at all. This dread seems incomparably greater than death itself, after a fulfilled life—awful as the sudden cessation of life always is. (pp. 41–42)

In raising concerns over the possibility of encountering at the end of one's life the feeling of having "lived the wrong life," and by relating to "eternity," Erikson has raised the most profound existential issues reminiscent of the Upaniṣadic story of Naciketas mentioned before. In his own way, Erikson suggests two different ways in which individuals tend to cope with their yearning for eternity. One way is to die a heroic death while helping kill "those on 'the other side' who share ... another world view" (p. 42). Erikson labels this way of transcending mortality "kill and survive." He contrasts this martyr's way of seeking immortality with the other, saintly way, which "emphasizes nothingness instead of somebodiness. It is 'not of this world,' and instead of a competition for the world's goods (including those securing the earthly identity), it seeks brotherhood in self-denial" (p. 42). "This way of identity is personified," says Erikson, "by the great religious leaders who in their own words represent the naked grandeur of the I that transcends all earthly identity in the name of Him who *is* I Am. The motto of this world view could be said to be 'die and become.' " (p. 43).

In a later article, "Galilean Saying and the Sense of '*I*,' " Erikson (1981) explains the significance of the saintly way of transcending temporal identity with the example of Jesus and also connects it with the theoretical analysis of the "I" as a transcendental center of awareness explained in the earlier phase of his theorizing. In this later paper, he says: "The *I*, after all, is the ground for the simple verbal assurance that each person is a *center of awareness* in a universe of communicable experience, a center so numinous that it amounts to a sense of being alive, and more, of being the vital condition of existence" (p. 323; emphasis added). Elsewhere in the same paper he first suggests that "the sense of 'I' is the most obvious and the most elusive endowment of creatures with consciousness" (p. 323). Then he repeats many of the same words, saying that "the sense of *I* is one of the most obvious facts of existence—indeed, may be *the* most obvious—and ... the most elusive." In an attempt to shed light on this elusive phenomenon, he goes back to his intellectual ancestors, referring to himself as "a modern person and a psychoanalyst in the Judeo-Christian orbit" (p. 322).

One of the many intellectual ancestors to whom Erikson returns in this context is William James, and quotes the following words from his *Psychology*:

> The I, or "pure ego," is a very much more difficult subject of inquiry than the Me. It is that which at any moment *is* conscious, whereas the Me is only one of the things it is conscious *of*. In other words, it is the Thinker; and the question immediately comes up *what* is the thinker? (James, 1910, pp. 195–196; quoted in Erikson, 1981, p. 323)

It is interesting that in raising these questions Erikson goes back indirectly to Kant, and although he does not discuss any of Kant's "philosophical" notions, he nevertheless touches upon the metaphysical issue of "*what* is the thinker?" Throughout this paper, Erikson's (1981) approach shows a clear shift away from his earlier work, in which he focused on the struggles and trepidation of individuals studied through case histories, biographies, and autobiographies. In his later work (Erikson, 1981), he explores the meaning of the "I" in the sayings of Jesus during the phase of his life when he wandered on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. In his analysis of this historical instance, Erikson addresses some deeply existential and even theological concerns about the nature of the "I." Reflecting once again on the stagewise changes in selfhood analyzed in his research on the life cycle, he now clearly recognizes that "throughout all these critical stages with all their develop-

ment, there remains for the *I* a certain existential solitariness which ... we depict as seeking love, liberation, salvation" (p. 323). In trying to understand these issues he consults not only the work of the existential theologian Rudolph Bultmann (1884–1976), but also the Bible itself, along with various studies in Biblical exegesis. Indeed, Erikson speaks in this paper like a Biblical scholar, offering his own interpretation of the light the Gospel throws on the nature of the "I."

Erikson explains that in his task of the interpretation of the ancient texts he was trying to follow the methodological guidelines of the "form critics" within the exegetic and hermeneutic tradition. Like the scholars of this tradition, he too was trying to bridge the historical gap between the ancient and the modern. This implies an attempt to make sense of what was said in a different sociohistorical context and with a different set of metaphors in the light of contemporary concerns, idioms, and metaphors. But unlike the existential theologians, he was not dealing with only theological issues, but also with some psychological ones. The sense of self, he says, "lies on the borderline of psychology and of theology" (p. 323). Moreover, as a developmental social psychologist, he began his exegetic exercise with a particular concern and a particular perspective in mind. My own understanding of Erikson's analysis of the Galilean sayings is that it reflects a significantly different phase of his theory of selfhood. Let me attempt an explanation.

In the earlier phase of his work, Erikson located the origins of the sense of *I* in the mutual recognition of the baby and the mother in close dyadic interaction. Like Cooley before him, he saw the *self* and the *other* as born together, except that he considered the other as a counterplayer in an ongoing interpersonal exchange and the mother as the Primal Other. According to Erikson's theory, the growing child encounters a social sphere of successively widening radii, and the self develops through interaction in a series of pairs of *I* and *you*. This implies an expanding sphere of relations successively including the father, siblings, neighbors, peers, teachers, and so on. The growing child gradually becomes part of an increasing number of dyads and triads with a series of *he* and *she* with whom the he or she has close encounters. Eventually, the growing individual must encounter the multiple *wes* with which he or she feels identified and also with corresponding *they* and *them*, who the *I* learns to "repudiate or to exclude as foreign, if not nonhuman altogether" (Erikson, 1981, p. 331). As the individual grows, the boundaries of what the social psychologists call in-groups and out-groups keep changing with the vicissitudes of the individual's and the society's history, requiring relevant redefinition and realignment of the *I* with a variety of *we*, and *they*. Erikson calls the division of humanity into exclusive communities pseudospeciation, implying that humanity, instead of being united into a single species, is split into numerous pseudospecies that fight with each other like predator and prey. This conceptualization of pseudospeciation suggests Erikson's concern with the problem of worldwide conflict and war. This concern is particularly understandable if we remember that he is a member of the generation of 20th-century Europe that witnessed two cataclysmic wars. Against this background, one of the things about the history of Palestine in the lifetime of Jesus that Erikson looks at with great concern is the way in which Jesus's society was divided and how Jesus dealt with those divisions.

Seeing it from the vantage point of such a concern, Erikson notes that during the time when Jesus wandered on the banks of the Sea of Galilee, the Jews of the Diaspora were deeply divided into several subgroups, such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and the Zealots. During the period of Jesus's childhood, the Zealots had revolted against the Romans, and the violence had continued for decades, while at the same time "the Sadducees, a party of the priestly aristocracy ... shared the maintenance of a precarious Pax Romana with the occupying power" (Erikson, 1981, p. 341). Yet when Jesus went around preaching as a rabbi throughout Palestine, he spoke to ordinary men and women, healing the sick and helping the poor regardless of their background. Jesus not only gave a renewed sense of the *we* to his followers, he also gave a new perspective on how to properly orient themselves to all of *them*. This orientation is best expressed in Jesus's famous exhortation not to go "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but rather to turn the other cheek if the enemy strikes on the right, and to go on extra mile if forced to go one mile (Matthew, 5:38–41). In connection with Jesus's message of love for not only one's kith and kin, but even one's enemies, Erikson (1981, pp. 361–362) asks us to remember an insight derived from psychoanalysis: that the sense of I, if allowed to be suppressed by the tyrannical inner voice of the superego, tends to either repress the inner evil and be subject to a self-destructive self-hate, or "projects" it onto the "they" and sets out to destroy them.[9] Jesus taught us by his own example how to project the *best* in us on the *worst* enemy, a lesson followed in our times by Mahatma Gandhi.

In his paper on the Galilean sayings, Erikson (1981, p. 354) excerpts the whole text of the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), which illustrates God's welcome to the repentant sinner. The "parable's meaning, in its patriarchal and monotheistic setting," says Erikson, "is the father's overall parental care and above all his *forgiveness*" (p. 356; emphasis added). Tolerating the visibly differing lifestyles of alien cultures and forgiving transgressions of individuals within one's own communities seems easier to those who are prepared to focus on the inner self and to recognize their own shortcomings, rather than persistently focusing on others and finding fault with them. Erikson goes to great length in pointing out that Jesus asked his followers to look inward for sources of both sin as well as the Kingdom of God. "And if the Kingdom is so vague in its temporal boundaries, *where* is it?" asks Erikson (1981, p. 347; emphasis original). Then he quotes Jesus's words, "Behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21), insisting that Luther's translation "within you" correctly conveys the "authentic" meaning of Jesus's original words. One of the main outcomes of Erikson's exegetic exercise is his conclusion that "[i]n the Bible, the most direct

reference to the human *I* is in the form of an inner light, that is, of a luminosity of awareness" (p. 329). An implication of this is, I think, that when one realizes that the *I* resides at the center of awareness, one need not find the self in a *we* and be wedded to the group's boundaries. The self, as but a point at the center of awareness, has no boundaries. One who realizes the self's lack of boundaries should no longer feel identified with a group with sharp boundaries that excludes and rejects outsiders. If more and more people realize this, then division of humanity into pseudospecies should come to an end. But Erikson does not actually say this; he seems to suggest as much when he turns away from his usual focus on the human sense of *I* to God's.

One of the questions Erikson (1981) tries to answer in his exegesis is: What is the meaning of "Moses's report that when he asked God for his name he received the answer: '*I am that I am*'?" (p. 324). In his search for an Answer, Erikson refers to Leif Boman who, he points out, "has noted that the word for 'being' ('hayah') . . . is used in connection with Jehovah's very name," and that it "has a very active quality" (p. 336). Erikson infers from this "an identity of being, and becoming, and even of acting and speaking," and goes on to quote a saying from the Old Testament (Isaiah, 40:28) that describes God as "everlasting" and suggests that He is *everywhere*. The implication of this is, I think, that the selfsameness or permanence of the *I* is understood as derived from Being, which is everlasting and ubiquitous, and presumably also divine. But "the dominating quality of the deity," says Erikson, is "that of a pervasive spirit, out of bounds for any personal characterization," (1981, pp. 335–356), and hence expressed in an enigmatic form: "I am that I am." Erikson's references to "deity" and "pervasive spirit" in connection with the human "sense of *I*" give the impression that he is talking about some ineffable "mystical" experience. This impression is deepened by his references in the same essay to the well-known mystics, Lao Tse and Meister Eckhart.

This reference in Erikson's search for the nature of selfhood to the ideas of the German mystic Meister Eckhart (1260–1327) brings us close to the perspective of the Advaita Vedānta, for Meister Eckhart's views have been recognized as being very similar indeed to those of the Indian scholar and Advaita Vedāntist, Śaṅkara (788–820) (see Otto, 1932). With this note, we shall turn to a discussion of the Advaita Vedāntic views of person, self, and identity, and then turn to a comparison of the views of Erikson and Śaṅkara.

Person, Self, and Identity According to Advaita Vedānta

As noted in the previous chapter, Vedānta is one of the six major orthodox schools of Indian philosophical thought that accepts the authority of the ancient scriptural texts, the *Vedas*. The term Vedānta is suggestive of its focus on the *Upaniṣads*, philosophical treatises that originated toward the latest phase (probably 1500–600 BCE) of the long period in which the Vedic texts were composed. Despite the hotly debated controversies over their historical origins, it is generally believed that the teachings of the principal Upaniṣads (about a dozen in number) were known to Gautama Buddha (563–483 BCE), and elicited his unorthodox reactions. Parts of the orthodox systems such as Mīmāṁsā, Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, and so on arose from an attempt to provide well-integrated theories based on the exegesis of the Upaniṣadic texts. The Vedāntic interpretation was systematized in the form of a series of aphorisms by Bādarāyaṇa around the beginning of the Common Era, or possibly earlier. Bādarāyaṇa's interpretation was in turn subject to many alternative interpretations. The most influential among them is the nondualist (Advaita) viewpoint of Śaṅkara (ca. 788–820 CE).

Śaṅkara was an intellectual of the highest order. Within the short span of his life he wrote definitive critiques of (1) the principal Upaniṣads (Śaṅkara, 1964), (2) the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (Śaṅkara, 1978), which is a most influential compendium of the systems of Indian thought, and (3) Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms (Śaṅkara, 1980).[10] In addition to these major works, he also wrote several minor treatises on Vedānta, composed devotional poems, engaged many prominent scholars of his time in debates and defeated or won them to his side, and also established monasteries in the four corners of the Indian subcontinent. Śaṅkara's work is often compared with that of Aristotle in terms of the incisiveness of logic, breadth of scope, and degree of influence. His theories were elucidated, expanded, and enriched by a long succession of highly capable scholars such as Sureśvara and Vācaspati Miśra (9th century), Sarvajñātman (10 century), Śrīharṣa (12th century), Prakāśātman (13th century), Sāyaṇa Mādhava and Vidyāraṇya (14th century), Madhusūdana, Appaya Dīkṣita, and Dharmarāja (16th century), Abhyankar (20th century), and innumerable others. Śaṅkara's nondualist Vedānta is a rich and live tradition to which scholars have continued to contribute. Vedānta is also part of a traditional way of life in which self-realization is considered the goal of life, and individuals aspiring to this goal find guidance from competent teachers (*gurus*) in their own efforts (*sādhanā*) to reach this goal.

It is impossible to do justice to a theory so rich and complex as Advaita Vedānta in a few pages. Within the limited space available, only a rough sketch of its basic ideas can be presented. The selective summary attempted in the following pages is slanted toward the topic and purpose of this volume, namely, distinctive views of person, self, and identity as viewed in a cross-cultural comparative context.

The Basic Tenets of the Advaita (Nondualist) Vedānta

Although Vedānta is generally counted as one of the six major systems of orthodox Indian thought, it contains within its fold several rival schools, such as those of Rāmānuja, Vallabha, Nimbāka, and Madhva. Regardless of the commonality in many of their aspects, they have fundamental, irreconcilable doctrinal

differences. Thus, while Śaṅkara's Advaita, or nondualistic, school is absolutistic, the rival schools of Rāmānuja and Madhva are theistic and postulate, respectively, "qualified monist" and dualist ontologies. Since it is impossible to cover the many varieties of Vedānta, only the doctrines of Śaṅkara's nondualist (Advaita) school will be discussed here, not those of Vedānta in general.

The most fundamental doctrine of Śaṅkara's philosophy is that there is one single principle that accounts for the ultimate reality. This principle, called "Brahman," is essentially indescribable. The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (2.3) declares that the "words and thoughts return from it and find it not." The *Bṛthadāranyaka* Upaniṣad (2.3.6) suggests that if you ask whether Brahman is like this, that, or the other, the answer must be "not so, not so." Nevertheless, for the sake of intelligibility, the indescribable Brahman is said to be approximately characterized by the following trilogy of terms: Being, Consciousness, and Bliss (*sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*). The following adjectives are also occasionally used to help appreciate the nature of Brahman: eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), sentient (*buddha*), ever released or emancipated (from the bondage of karma) (*mukta*), existent (*satya*), subtle (*sūkṣma*), all-pervasive or ubiquitous (*vibhu*), and "without a second" or nondual (advitīya).[11] Brahman is considered to be the immanent and transcendent principle of the universe; it permeates the entire world, and even extends beyond. An important thesis of the Advaita Vedānta is that the individual self (*Ātman*) is ultimately the same as Brahman, although it appears to be different because of primeval misconstrual (*avidyā*, roughly translated as "ignorance"). The world continues to appear in its ordinary, day-to-day form as long as one continues to cling to the misconstrued notions of the self and the world. But if one follows the Advaita Vedāntic method (to be described below), one can realize the true nature of the self and of the ultimate reality as it *is*.

Here one may ask: If the Advaitists claim that Brahman is the single principle or reality "without a second," how do they account for the infinite variety of objects and the innumerable individual "selves" we see in the world? The Advaitists use various metaphors to account for the appearance of multiplicity in a nondual reality: The many changing objects are but temporary modifications of the same unchanging Brahman, like innumerable waves in a pool of water. The individual selves are but many reflections of the same Brahman; they appear to be different even as the same single sun appears to be many as it reflects in innumerable waves of water. Even as the space contained within a pot and in the house are but identical, so is the individual soul identical with the Supreme Soul (*paramātman*).

If this is correct, one might ask, how did the appearance of many originate from a single existent? In answer to this question, an elaborate theory of the origination of the five fundamental elements has been suggested since the time of the Upaniṣads.[12] A simpler, more interesting account of the genesis of the manifold world from the original One is found in a beautiful hymn of the *Ṛg Veda* (Book 10, hymn 129),[13] called the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*. It suggests that, at the beginning, there was only the One, without dualities of any kind: existence versus nonexistence, death versus immortality, light versus darkness, day versus night and so on. "I am One; let me be many," it said; and thus arose Desire, the primal seed of the world. "Would the gods know when this happened?" speculates the sage who authored the hymn. Then he answers the question himself, saying that the gods would not know it anyway, for even *they* must have arrived on the scene sometime later! In other words, there is no use speculating where and when it came from; we must assume that *māyā*, the "grand illusion" of the manifold world that envelops the single reality, is without a beginning.

Individuality experienced by the selves is a consequence of this primeval illusion. It is a congenital error of human beings and persists in them as long as the "ordinary" states of consciousness last. However, it is dispelled with the dawn of an altered state of consciousness called the *turīyā* (literally, the "fourth") state of consciousness. (It may be recalled that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Upaniṣadic affirmation of the Self is based on the experience of this state.) In this state, the distinction between the subject and object, knower and known, which is characteristic of the ordinary states of consciousness, disappears. It is a transcognitive state, and as such cannot be adequately accounted for in terms of concepts and words. When such a state is attained, the practical reality of ordinary experience is said to be invalidated or falsified, just as what appears real in a dream is invalidated upon awakening. It is only from the vantage point of this higher level of consciousness that the phenomenal world is considered to be illusory. For all practical (*vyāvahārika*) purposes, however, it is taken to be true insofar as "it runs in an orderly manner uncontradicted by the accumulated experience of all human beings" (Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 446). Although there is but one reality, it may be recognized either as the transcendental reality (*parā sattā*) of the formless (*nirākāra*) and qualityless (*nirguṇa*) Brahman as experienced in a transcognitive state of consciousness, or as the phenomenal world (*jagat*) that constitutes the practical reality (*vyāvahārika sattā*) comprehensible by means of the ordinary or sensory experience and reason.[14] The *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad (1.4) distinguishes between two types of knowledge: the higher form of knowledge (*parā vidyā*) concerning the ultimate reality and the lower form (*aparā vidyā*) pertaining to the phenomenal world. In the system of Advaita Vedānta, this doctrine of "one reality known in different ways" combines a monistic metaphysics with a dualistic epistemology.

The Advaita Vedānta, like most other schools of Indian thought, devotes considerable attention to an analysis of the means to the attainment of knowledge and the criteria for its validation. At the practical level, the following six are accepted as means to knowledge (*pramāṇa*): direct perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, nonperception, and postulation. (We will have more on this in the next chapter when we discuss the self-as-knower.) As noted by Das-

gupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1), "right knowledge in Vedānta is the knowledge of an object which has not been found contradicted" (p. 471).[15] Abhyankar (1928/1968) explains that what we call "knowledge" (*pramā*) is the cognition, or a mental state shaped in the image of an object, that has not (yet) been contradicted or falsified (*abādhita*) by any other means available.[16] That which is experienced in the fourth state of consciousness (*turīyā*) supplants the knowledge obtained through the six above-mentioned means in the ordinary wakeful state of consciousness, but is not contradicted by them. Transcognitive experience (*anubhava*), which is attained when all cognitive processes come to a standstill, is considered to be the only dependable means to knowledge of the *ultimate* nature of the Self and reality.

Śaṅkara accepts the authority of the scriptures (*āgama*); it is recognized under one of the six means to knowledge mentioned above, namely, verbal testimony. But he restricts the scope of the testimony of the scriptures to truths pertaining to the higher level of reality, which were revealed to the Vedic sages in their transcognitive experience. In regard to practical matters of the "lower" level of reality, he depends only on direct experience (*pratyakṣa*) and reason (*tarka*). Śaṅkara (1978, 18.66) unequivocally states that one cannot be convinced that fire is lightless and cold, even if 100 scriptural proclamations asserted so.[17] This statement declares his total emancipation from the clutches of religious dogma. Śaṅkara's resolute reliance on direct experience and rational principles (such as noncontradiction, or *abādha*) in regard to knowledge of all practical matters reflects the spirit of science manifest in his epistemology. Regardless of a scientific spirit manifest in this manner, however, Advaita Vedānta goes far beyond the scope of natural science, since, among other things, it deals with a transcendental reality, the nature of selfhood, attainment of higher levels of fulfillment in life, and other such concerns, which lie beyond the scope of science.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Upaniṣads (e.g., *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4.3.33; *Taittirīya*, 2.8) describe the blissfulness of Brahman as experienced in the fourth state of consciousness to be infinitely more joyous when compared with all the pleasures attainable through wealth and power. Since the true self is essentially the same as Brahman, bliss is at the very core of every human being. Most of us do not ordinarily experience the blissfulness of our real nature but experience suffering instead, since we tend to cling to erroneous notions of who we are. The practical aspect of the Advaita Vedānta involves a procedure for the removal of erroneous conceptions of the self, and thereby for its restoration to the original state of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. The aim of Vedānta is the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*) by means of self-knowledge (Dharmarāja, 1972, p. 3), and the essence of liberation is characterized as "boundless joy and utter removal of pain."[18] In the balance of this chapter we shall first examine the Vedānta views of person, self, and identity, as well as its view of the nature and causes of suffering and ways for the restoration of the person to the original state of bliss.

The Concept of *Jīva*: The Advaita Vedāntic View of Personhood

The word *jīva* literally means a living being; all humans, animals, and even insects are *jīvas*. It is a common belief of the Indian culture that a *jīva* must go through the life cycles of millions of species (*yoni*) before being transformed into a human being. This view is vaguely suggestive of the origin of the human species in progressive evolution, although the ancients did not formulate a fully naturalistic, elaborate, and explicit theory of phylogenesis such as Darwin's. At any rate, in Vedānta, the term *jīva* is generally used to designate a human being rather than just any organism on the ladder of its ascent to the human form. From the early period of the Upaniṣads (*Taittirīya*, Chapter 2), the *jīva* has been conceptualized as a multilayered entity. There are five layers nested in one another, like the concentric sheaths of an onion (see Fig. 3.1). The outermost layer of the *jīva* is said to be "made of food" (*annamya kośa*), and designates the body. The second inner layer is called the "sheath of the vital breath" (*prāṇamaya kośa*). It involves breathing and other bodily processes that activate the organs and keep them functioning. The third inner layer, called the "mental sheath" (*manomaya kośa*), involves the sense organs. Since it is through the sensory functions like seeing and hearing that one seeks the objects of desire, this mental sheath is supposed to be the seat of egoistic striving and is said to manifest itself in the form of the involvement of the "me" in what is "mine" (Śaṅkara, 1921, p. 168). The fourth inner layer, called the "cognitive sheath" (*vijñānamaya kośa*), refers to the intellect, involving perhaps the ideas, concepts, or constructs that one uses in getting to know the world. Finally, the fifth and innermost core of the *jīva* is called the "joyous sheath" (*ānandamaya kośa*). It is so called because it is said to reflect the bliss (*ānanda pratibimba*) characteristic of the true self, and therefore is considered to be the seat of pleasure. The true self, the Ātman, which is manifest as the experiencing witness at the center of the *jīva*'s awareness, is claimed to be identical with the ubiquitous

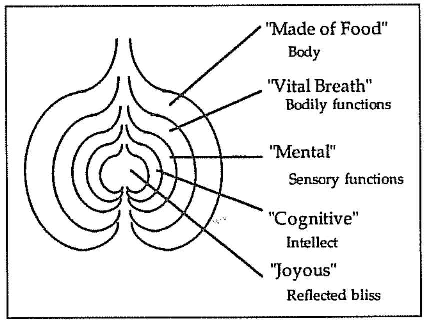

Figure 3.1. The Advaita Vedāntic model of person: The five sheaths of *jīva*.

Brahman and is approximately characterized by the terms Being, Consciousness, and Bliss.

Here it is necessary to comment on the meaning and significance of the concept of *jīva* in the Advaita Vedānta theory of personhood. First, it obviously involves a structural metaphor—a device commonly used by contemporary theorists of personality—describing the person as a whole composed of "parts" (e.g., the Freudian id, ego, and superego). Second, it suggests a hierarchical arrangement of parts, implying the relatively greater importance of the parts at the "core" compared to the "peripheral" parts. Third, it may be noted that the various layers of the *jīva* resemble the different selves in William James's notion of the self (see Fig. 2.1 in the previous chapter). While James places the bodily self at the base of a vertical hierarchy of selves, the same is viewed as an outer sheath in the Vedāntic view of the person. James's spiritual self vaguely reminds us of the cognitive sheath of the *jīva*, since both indicate conscious, nonmaterial, and relatively "central" or "higher" aspects of personality. Both James and Advaita Vedānta distinguish between the self-as-subject and the self-as-object; however, unlike James, Vedānta accepts only the former to be the true self, dismissing the identification of the self with any object as ultimately deceptive. This is an important point of difference between them, and we shall examine it in some detail later on in this chapter.

The Upaniṣads often used the term *puruṣa* to designate an individual, and the terms *puruṣa*, *ātman*, and *jīvātman* were often used as synonyms. Although the word *puruṣa* as used in contemporary Indian languages connotes man rather than woman, the ancient Sanskrit usage implied no such gender preference.[19] As noted in Chapter 2, it was common in the Upaniṣads to characterize the individual as a knower, enjoyer/sufferer, and an agent.[20] This characterization of the *jīva* is central to the Advaita Vedānta view of personhood. It is impossible to know, do, or enjoy anything without proper equipment such as normal sensory and motor organs and cognitive capacities. Thus, the *Kaṭha* (3.4) Upaniṣad says that it is only a self equipped with senses and mind that can be an enjoyer.[21] It is the delusional association of the Ātman–Brahman with "adjuncts" (*upādhi*) like the mind and senses that produces the individuality and "enjoyership" (*bhoktṛtvam*) of the individual *jīva*. Śaṅkara (1978, 13.20)[22] notes that it is only the individualized *jīva* (rather than the infinite Ātman–Brahman) that can be an enjoyer, and outlines (in 1980, 2.3.32) the nature of the "inner instrument" needed for its activities and enjoyment in the world. The inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*) includes (1) the *mind* (*manas*) manifesting attentivity or "minding" as we might call it, (2) the *intellect* (*buddhi*), which implies the capacity for determination or ascertainment (*niścayātmaka*) and (3) the citta, which implies (as articulated in Patañjali's Yoga) the storehouse of memories and other traces of past experience that prompt actions under appropriate conditions. The inner instrument is believed to continually undergo various modifications that manifest in the form of desire, construal, doubt, faith or belief and disbelief, perseverance or fickleness, shame, intellection, fear, and so on (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 1.5.3). Such feelings and thoughts are only the modifications of the inner instrument and not of the eternally blissful Self (*Ātman*, but one continues to experience them as one's own as long as the self remains erroneously identified with its adjunct, the inner instrument.

The Concept of *Jīva* in Context: Some Aspects of the Indian Worldview

Every theory of personhood is a part of a larger worldview that the theorist shares with his or her community. To understand and appreciate the concept of *jīva*, it is necessary to have some idea of the worldview in which it developed. To help identify the crucial aspects of the traditional Indian worldview that are relevant in this regard, we may turn to the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, which is one of the most popular and influential texts of the Indian tradition. It represents the quintessence of the Upaniṣadic thought and reflects some of the most dominant aspects of the Indian worldview. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Śaṅkara refers to many concepts that have been dominant in the Indian worldview, but are neither central to nor a specialty of the Advaita Vedānta. For instance, he comments on the concept of Prakṛti, which is postulated by the dualistic Sāṅkhya system of philosophy to designate the material as opposed to the spiritual domain of reality. As a strict monist, Śaṅkara cannot accept the concept of Prakṛti as a separate and independent ontological category, as the dualistic Sāṅkhyas do. He therefore adapts it to the Advaita Vedānta by equating Prakṛti with *māyā*, i.e., primeval "illusion" or misconstrual that manifests in the form of the phenomenal world. Śaṅkara (1978, 13.29) cites the authority of the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (4.10)[23] for doing so. We shall leave the issue of the justifiability of adapting a basically dualistic concept within a monist framework to the apologists of the Advaita Vedānta and turn to a brief account of the concept of Prakṛtri. For, it is the "material world" of Prakṛti—or practical reality (*vyāvahārika sattā*) of *māyā*—in which all organisms (or *jīvas*) must function.

Prakṛti designates the entire material world. It is believed to be in a constant state of flux. The incessant changes in it are believed to be the result of continual interaction among three components, qualities (*guṇas*), or strands from which the cloth of the material world is woven, so to speak. The three strands of Prakṛti are: inertia or mass (*tamas*), movement or energy (*rajas*), and *sattva*, a concept that is difficult to translate into an English equivalent. *Sattva* is variously translated as lightness, illumination, or "intelligence-stuff" (Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, pp. 241–244), and is considered to be "potential consciousness" and is associated with pleasure, goodness, and happiness in a person's experience and behavior (Radhakrishnan, 1927/1931, Vol. 2, p. 262). All these strands or qualities (*guṇa*) are present in anything at anytime, but one of them may dominate at a given time while

others recede; things keep changing as the balance among the three qualities is disturbed every now and then. The changes brought about by the interaction of qualities of Prakṛti are assumed to be lawfully governed. This axiomatic assumption is generally designated by the Law of Karma (O'Flaherty, 1980). As noted in Chapter 1, this law states that every action (which is the literal meaning of the word *karma*) has its necessary antecedents and inevitable consequences. It implies a complex variety of determinism that applies equally to physical as well as mental phenomena, and functions equally in natural as well as moral domains. Its acceptance ensures that the world is a cosmos and not a chaos; events are lawfully governed and not left to happenstance. I shall postpone the discussion of the causal and moral implications of the Law of Karma to Chapter 6. In the following section of this chapter, I shall focus on the tripartite view of the material world of Prakṛti (or *māyā*, as the Advaitists call it) in regard to its implications for (1) the regularities in the phenomenal world, (2) the nature of the individual differences, and (3) the determinants of human behavior.

Regularities in the Phenomenal World

The idea that all changes in the world are caused by a lawful interaction of the components of which things are made suggests that all events in the world are natural occurrences, not the results of mysterious interventions by wanton spirits or deities. The Sāṅkhya system, which has specially developed this concept, is atheistic; it is assumed that there is no higher power to interfere with the lawful governance of the world. According to the theistic formulations of Vedānta, like those of Rāmānuja and Madhva, the future of a person is believed to depend on the grace or intervention of God (*Īśvara*), which implies that God has power to interfere with the Law of Karma. The Advaita Vedānta admits no such divine power. Śaṅkara (1978, 9.10) cites the authority of the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (6.11), which describes God as an "over seer of deeds" (*karmādhyakṣa*), residing in all living beings as a mere witness.[24] He is like Newton's God who gave Nature the laws of motion and then left Nature alone to govern herself according to them. Unlike Newton's laws, however, the Law of Karma is supposed to apply to the moral as well as natural sphere; as you sow, so you reap. This law applies strictly to the moral order; even God could not give anyone unmerited rewards. In his commentary on the Vedānta aphorisms, Śaṅkara (1980, 2.1.34–35) suggests that if we were to think of God as having the capacity to interfere with the working of the Law of Karma, we would have to accept the charges of favoritism (*vaiṣamya*) and cruelty (*nairghṛṇya*) against God. Śaṅkara would of course have the God of his conception untouched by such charges. Like St. Augustine, he assigns the blame of the differing fates of individuals to doings of their own will and exempts God from blemish. We will have another look at this issue in Chapter 6.

The foregoing account of the strictly law-governed nature of the events within the domain of the Prakṛti should make it clear that it conveys a *naturalistic* worldview, not a supernaturalistic one. Like the worldview of science, it assumes that there is orderliness of events in the world and attempts to explain them in terms of a lawful interaction of mass and energy. The concepts of *tamas* and *rajas* can be said to be roughly comparable to the modern concepts of mass and energy, although they are much less precisely formulated than their contemporary counterparts. The third component of Prakṛti, namely *sattva*, is somewhat similar to "information," provided that the latter is accorded an ontic status and causal potency as suggested by Bakan (1974). Taken in this sense, the tripartite model of Prakṛti tries to account for all events in the world in terms of the interaction of mass, energy, and information, so to speak. This is like Popper's model, which construes three interacting "worlds," or components of the cosmic order, to help explain the nature of physical, biological, and psychological events (Popper & Eccles, 1977). (For a comparison of Popper's view of the three "worlds" with the three strands of Prakṛti, see Paranjpe, 1983.)

One implication of the idea of the Law of Karma in theories of personhood is that persons are seen as simultaneously belonging to a natural and a moral order. These ideas can be seen as parallels to Erikson's concepts of the person as belonging simultaneously to the interpenetrating spheres of the "soma" suggestive of the natural order and to the "ethos" or a moral order. An implication of the tripartite division of the natural order of Prakṛti or phenomenal world for conceptions of personality may be pointed out here. The tripartite division of Prakṛti is used in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to help account for individual differences. I have explained the typology of persons in terms of the *sāttvika*, *rājasa*, and *tāmasika* types in an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1988, pp. 193–194). Since it is not crucial for the present purpose, it is not reproduced here.

The Nature and Determinants of Human Behavior

In the Advaita Vedānta, as in many other schools of Indian thought, human behavior or action is designated by a generic concept called *karma*, which includes physical, verbal, as well as mental activity. All experiences and behaviors of organisms are believed to leave behind their traces (*saṁskāra*), which bear fruit (*phala*) under appropriate conditions, leading to their inevitable consequences on later experiences and behaviors. If the original experience is positive, its traces will prompt the organism to seek the objects associated with the original experience and vice versa. The tendencies to seek or avoid objects are thus traced to the history of the organism. Some of these tendencies result from traces left behind by experiences and behaviors of the organism in the present life cycle in the form of memories (*smṛti*). Others may be the results of traces left behind by events prior to birth, which manifest in the form of drives (*vāsanā*) (see Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 263). This view resonates with the contemporary notion that an organ-

ism's present action tendencies are a result of its developmental and phylogenetic history.

According to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system, which has elaborately developed a theory of *karma*, the totality of potencies for action that are cumulated in an organism as a result of the past are designated as *karmāśaya*. Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (see Patañjali, 1978, 2.13)[25] suggest that the nature of traces accumulated over the previous life cycles that may not have been expended or played out as yet determine the type of species in which an individual would be born, the nature of the life cycle it would experience, and the kinds of pleasure and pain it will experience in the subsequent life cycle. This suggests that human beings, as members of a species, would experience their passage through their life cycle in a pattern common to the species. If this interpretation is correct, then a modern conception of ontogeny, such as the Eriksonian view of epigenesis, may be viewed as reasonably compatible with the Yogic and Vedāntic conception of *vāsanā*, roughly meaning drive. This view amounts to an explanation of individual behavior in terms of what we call *heredity*, except that this ancient view of the heritability of character is based on the notion of reincarnation of the soul rather than an understanding of genetics.

We shall leave aside the controversial notion of reincarnation, since it cannot be adequately discussed within the scope of this volume. We may simply note, however, that the idea of reincarnation is a corollary of the more basic notion that present behaviors are a consequence of a chain of events in the past, and that present actions will in turn lead to their inevitable consequences in the future. Everyone is thus caught in an endless cycle of events and their consequences; the burden of the past chains us to the world. This notion suggests a deterministic account of human behavior and is adopted by almost the entire spectrum of otherwise diverse schools of Indian thought. It raises the question of freedom versus determinism in a manner parallel to the counterpart of this issue in Western philosophy and psychology. We shall return to this issue in Chapter 6.

Self and Identity According to the Advaita Vedānta

Self is clearly the most central issue in the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta. Some of the prominent features of the Advaita Vedānta view could be concisely presented with the help of a free paraphrase of selected verses from Śaṅkara's popular work, the *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination* (Vivekacūḍāmaṇi) (Śaṅkara, 1921):

> Inhalation, exhalation, yawning, hunger, movement and the like are the functions of the vital breath [not of the Ātman, the true Self]. The ego, reflecting the consciousness of the Ātman, glows through the activities of eyes and so on, manifesting itself through egoism and pride of the "me" and "mine." It is the ego, not the eternally blissful Ātman, that takes pride in being an agent and enjoys or suffers with gains and losses. (verses 102–105)

> There is something within us which is always the substrate of the conscious feeling of the "I." That something is a witness of the three states of consciousness [wakeful, dream, and deep sleep], and is different from the five sheaths of the *jīva*. This something sees everything, but is not seen in turn; it enlivens the intellect, but is not affected by the intellect in turn. (verses 125–127)
>
> This Inner Self (*antarātman*) is the Eternal Self (*puruṣaḥ purāṇo*), and involves an integral experience of bliss (*akhaṇḍasukhānubhūti*). (verse 131) This is the witness of the mind and its modifications, and of the activities of the body and the sense organs. He accompanies all changes and activities like heat in an iron ball, but neither acts nor is subject to modifications. (verse 133)
>
> The misconstrual of the non-self as self ties a man to egoism, and it is this tie (*bandha*) which leads to the suffering of the cycle of birth and death. Having considered the body to be real and construing it to be the "me," the *jīva* nurtures it and protects it by following its desires. The ego thus becomes trapped in a reality of its own (mis)construal—like a moth in its cocoon. (verse 137)
>
> To emancipate himself from bondage a wise man should discriminate between the Self and the non-Self. Thereby alone can he recognize himself as Being–Consciousness–Bliss, and attain happiness. (Verse 152) (paraphrased by A. C. Paranjpe; see Paranjpe, 1988, p. 196)

It should be clear from the above paraphrase of Śaṅkara's views that in the Advaita Vedānta the Self is *not* equated with the body and its activities, sensory or cognitive functions, the ego, egoism, or agency. While the Advaita Vedāntists unambiguously characterize the person as one who knows, feels, and acts, they often characterize the Self as a witness (*sākṣin*) that "stays over the peak" (*kūṭastha*) to sharply separate it from the cognitive, affective, and active features of personhood and to emphasize its immovable or unchanging nature.[26] The Advaitic view of the Self is thus clearly transpersonal and transcendental. In Advaita Vedānta a sharp distinction is made between the true self (or Self) and the ego (*ahaṁkāra*), and the ego is seen as a product of misconstrual. The metaphor of the moth trapped in a cocoon of its own creation vividly portrays the image of an ego wrapped up in a cognitively constructed reality of its own making. It is common in the Advaita Vedānta to view the Ātman as self-luminous; it provides the "light" that makes the understanding possible, and needs no outside source of illumination for it to be seen.[27] In contrast, the mind is believed to be "material" (*jaḍa*), and not self-luminous. The mind, as well as thoughts that emerge in it, are said to derive their luminous or "glowing" quality from the Ātman, just as a colorless crystal (*sphaṭika*) reflects the bright color of the hibiscus flower when placed next to it. Ātman is the "seer" (*dṛk*) and all the rest is "seen" (*dṛśya*). The distinction between the seer/seen or subject/object (*viṣayin*/*viṣaya*) is central to the Vedāntic view of the self. *Dṛg–dṛśya Viveka*, a popular Advaita Vedāntic text of uncertain authorship explains this distinction as follows:

> Form is perceived by the eye which is its perceiver; the eye is perceived by the mind which is its perceiver; the modifications of the mind are known by the Witness who knows them all but is not known in turn. (1)

> The eye is able to distinguish between the blue and the yellow, and is also able to perceive as unity [i.e., as single (*ekadhā*) category, "form"], as well as the multiplicity of forms such as big and small, long and short. (2)
>
> The mind is able to cognize the dullness and sharpness of sight and also of the presence and absence of sight because of its ability to put them into a single category. The same applies to the sensation of sound and touch [implying that the unity of the mind is to be similarly inferred]. (3)
>
> It is possible for us to distinguish between doubt and decision, between the state of belief versus disbelief, and between feelings of modesty, fear, and others because consciousness (*citi*) can bring them into a single category. (4) (*Dṛg–dṛśya viveka*, 1–4; paraphrased by A. C. Paranjpe; see Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 266–267)

Quite clearly, the "seer" of the Advaita Vedānta is the subject connected with a myriad of objects of consciousness. There are some clear Western parallels that may be noted here. First, the unity of the perceiver is conceptualized mostly like Kant's (1781/1966) "synthetical unity of apperception" (p. 77). Second, the connection between the subject and object may be understood in terms of what Brentano (1874/1974) called intentionality, or the directedness of consciousness to its objects. Third, the concept of *dṛk*, described above, is comparable to Husserl's (1933/1977, p. 66) notion of the self-identical subject-pole that retains its sameness in relation to the ever-changing objects at the object-pole of the intentional states of consciousness. Fourth, the Advaita Vedāntic "seer" is a transcendental entity similar to the Kantian transcendental ego, except that, unlike the latter, it is not a center of volition as well. This is an important difference that will be discussed later in this chapter. Before we discuss that point, it is necessary to see how Śaṅkara accounts for the unity and sameness of the Self.

Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) beings his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahmasūtra* by saying that although subject and object (*viṣayin–viṣaya*) are as contradictory as light and darkness, they appear fused because of an illusory superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the properties of one on the other.[28] The standard Advaitic examples of illusion are mistaking a rope for a snake, where the dangerousness of the snake is mistakenly attributed to a harmless rope, or mistaking a pillar for a man, where the human properties of life and motion are superimposed on an inanimate pillar. Similarly, the Ātman, which is unchanging and always blissful, appears to be continually changing, now happy then sad, clear or confused and so on, due to the superimposition of the attributes of ego onto it. Reciprocally, the ever-changing ego derives its sense of selfsameness by misattributing the Ātman's permanence onto itself. Knowing, acting, and suffering are the properties of the ego, born of the mind or "inner instrument" (*antaḥkaraṇa*); it is the ego that doubts and determines, feels clear or confused, agitated or arrested, exhilarated or morose. Yet, such states are attributed to the Ātman, which transcends all such mutations. On the other hand, the fickle ego derives a sense of permanence and the inert body gains consciousness from the unchanging and conscious Ātman. Seen from the Advaita Vedāntic point of view, this is the most fundamental attributional error, whereby the true self is identified with the nonself and vice versa. Due to this error, the "I," an unchanging self-as-subject, identifies itself with the ego and falsely sees itself as continually changing: now sad, then happy, sometimes confused, other times clear, and so on. The continually changing ego, on the other hand, perceives itself as having remained the same, falsely deriving its sense of selfsameness from the qualityless (*nirguṇa*) and unchanging Self. According to the Advaita Vedānta, such misconstrual constitutes the primeval illusion (*ādi māyā*) and is the prime cause of human suffering.

Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) suggests that the dual attributional errors mistaking the Self for the ego and vice versa occur because of memory.[29] Past memories of dangerous encounters with snakes, for instance, often prompt a fearful misperception of a rope as a serpent. Why do so many people suffer from the same error mistaking their true Self for the body, mind, or ego? The answer is that the effects of past experience keep on prompting us to think, feel, and act in particular ways. Effects of the past include the memories of experiences from birth onward and the cumulative traces or the beginningless past prior to birth that are passed on to us in the form of drives (*vāsanā*). The history of countless beings (*jīvas*) is traced back to the primeval illusion (*māyā*) that has always masked the single reality; every being has been trapped throughout the past in the perpetual cycle of actions and their consequences. As soon as one discards the erroneous identification with the ever-changing states of the ego, the true nature of the Self as Being, Consciousness, and Bliss shines forth, and one sidesteps and thereby "escapes" the miserable chain of action and its consequences.

The Advaita Vedāntic View of the Human Condition

In the Indian culture, by and large, life has been commonly viewed as part of a chain of action and its consequences that one must try to end, not perpetuate. A common assumption is that the balance sheet of worldly (as well as other worldly) life is marked with red ink; on the whole, the amount of suffering exceeds that of pleasures.[30] This view is reflected in several schools of Indian thought and underlies the notion that seeking release (*mokṣa*) from the chain of actions and its consequences (*saṁsāra*) is one of the central goals of life.[31] We shall examine this persistent theme of Indian culture in some detail in Chapter 5. Here, it is enough to note that the Advaita Vedānta follows the Upaniṣads in assuming that true happiness can be attained not by pursuing the pleasures that money and power can buy but through the discovery of an inexhaustible source of inner bliss. This view stands in contrast to the views of the human condition with an emphasis on suffering from sin, anxiety, alienation, or maladaptation, which are popular in the West, that have shaped, respectively, Christian, Freudian, existentialist, and behavioral psychologies. (For a more detailed discussion of views of the human condition and their implications for psychology, see Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 85–113.)

The Advaita Vedāntic Method for Self-realization

Before undertaking a specific set of practices prescribed by the Advaita Vedāntic method for self-realization, a person is expected to have some background preparation. According to Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (versus 18–28), this preparation involves acquiring the following four aids or means (*sādhana-catuṣṭaya*) to self-realization:

1. Make a wise discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent (*nitya–anitya–viveka*) with regard to the self. The basic idea here is that one should critically examine *what* remains unchanged within us throughout life and thereby provides a firm basis for our personal identity. In other words, one should try to find out what it is that allows the ever-changing "me"s to be reincarnations of one and the same "I." The Advaita Vedānta provides a simple guideline for the quest for identity: the true Self is that which always remains the same; the continually changing self-definitions are manifestations of the ego, which is *not* the true Self. As pointed out in *Dṛg–dṛśya viveka* (quoted above), what remains unchanged in an individual is only the self-as-subject (*dṛk*); every single aspect of the self-as-object (*dṛśya*) changes now or later in life. To put it in the language of William James, a firm basis for one's personal identity cannot be found in one's "empirical selves" such as the body, material possessions, social roles, or the attitudes and images about oneself. To put it in Erik Erikson's terminology, the only thing that remains unchanged in a person throughout the life cycle is the "center of awareness," not one's ego identity. The first means to self-realization according to the Advaita Vedānta, then, is to launch a serious inquiry into the nature of the self, taking permanence as the hallmark of the true self.

It must be noted here that a mere cognitive awareness of what remains the same in a person or even a scholarly understanding of the issue of sameness versus change in personality is not considered adequate. If one has recognized that material possessions and social selves are impermanent, and is yet strongly emotionally attached to them, one is not truly self-realized. Genuine self-realization requires much more than an intellectual exercise, as the remainder of the list of aids suggests.

2. Detachment with regard to gains in this or the otherworldly life (*ihāmutra–phala–virāga*). As long as one is convinced that wealth, power, a place in the heaven, or other such worldly or otherworldly gains are truly worth attaining, one is wedded to a pursuit of "external" goals. Success in attaining them depends only partly on what is within one's control, and when attained they do not guarantee complete and permanent satisfaction. According to the Advaita Vedānta, lasting peace or tranquility does not depend on any external objects; it lies in the deepest regions of inner subjectivity. The Advaita Vedānta is prescribed for those who have recognized the transience of object-dependent gains or pleasures, have set out in search of a lasting peace of mind, and are prepared to cultivate a dispassionate outlook toward worldly gains such as power or wealth.

3. The acquisition of the following six virtues:
   a. Controlling the mind so as to rest it firmly on a single objective (*śama*)
   b. Withdrawing senses from the objects of pleasure (*dama*)
   c. Preventing the mind from being controlled by external objects (*uparati*)
   d. Forbearance, or enduring hardships without lamenting or becoming anxious (*titikṣā*)
   e. Faith (*śraddhā*) in the validity of the teaching of the scriptures and the advice of a capable teacher (*guru*). (Against the backdrop of Śaṅkara's epistemology discussed earlier, it should be clear that faith here does not mean an antirational attitude or a "blind" faith.)
   f. Firm resting of the mind on the formless Brahman without being enticed by desires for indulgence (*samādhāna*)

4. Intense desire for liberating oneself from egoism and the perpetual chain of action and its consequences (*mumukṣutvam*).

Three Steps to Self-realization According to the Advaita Vedānta

The Advaita Vedānta prescribes a relentless critical inquiry into the true nature of the self (*ātmavicāra*) as a method for attaining self-realization. Ever since the early period of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (2.4.5; 4.5.6), numerous Advaita Vedāntic texts have suggested the following three steps in this process of inquiry:

1. Carefully "listening" to the nondualist teaching of Vedānta (*śravaṇa*)
2. Repeatedly and deeply reflecting upon or contemplating what is learned from those teachings (*manana*)
3. Becoming so completely absorbed in contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) of Brahman that no other thought enters the mind

The first step just mentioned is no different from the usual form of studying such as listening to lectures or reading books. In the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, Dharmarāja (1972, p. 212) describes the second step, namely reflection, as a mental activity involving an attempt to clear all doubts and refute all possible objections against the Advaita Vedāntic doctrine of the nondual Brahman. The doubts and objections may be based on any and all sources of knowledge: observation, inference, argument, scriptural statements, and so on. One is expected to try to carefully examine and refute them all in a rational manner. In his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (2.4.5), Śaṅkara stresses that this activity involves the use of reason (*tarka*). A careful rational assessment of all conceivable alternative viewpoints is expected to lead to a courage of conviction and single-minded devotion to one's chosen path. Not a single doubt or objection should remain unexamined. Every doubt and objection should be satisfactorily resolved, so that one is able to concentrate the mind fully and without distraction. Following this comes the third and final step in which one mediates with full concentration on the Ātman–

Brahman. Attention is withdrawn from all objects of thought, so that nothing excepting the center of awareness is left in the field of experience, thus revealing the Ātman, or the self-as-witness in its nascent form. We shall return to more detailed discussion of these three steps to self-realization in the next chapter.

The Advaita Vedāntic Method Interpreted in Contemporary Idiom

The Advaita Vedāntic method involves an ambitious and highly demanding program aimed at a complete transformation of one's life. It is not a program of therapy to be administered by a therapist to psychotic or neurotic patients, but a self-help program for those who aspire to higher levels of fulfillment. The Advaita Vedāntic prescription for the cultivation of virtues such as dispassionateness and forbearance may appear to some as a moralism, but it is interesting to note that these virtues are recommended as "aids" to self-realization rather than ends in themselves. The process of self-development described in the Advaita Vedānta begins with the recognition of one's imperfections, moves through the process of the cultivation of dispassionateness and through the "steps" such as study and reflection, and ends in self-realization.[32] It is this movement from ignorance to enlightenment that is interpretable in cognitive psychological terms. Such an interpretation would be admittedly partial, because the practice of the Advaita Vedāntic methods is far more complex than the cognitive aspects that I wish to focus on in the discussion to follow.

The first step of the Advaita Vedāntic method (*śravaṇa*) involves acquiring and reorganizing information as required in any program of study. In cognitive psychological terms, it involves assimilation and accommodation in a Piagetian sense, i.e., "taking in" new information in the hitherto established ways of understanding and changing established ways of understanding in light of the new information. The second, reflective stage (*manana*) requires a critical study of "scriptural" texts, and as such it is comparable to "exegesis" in the Biblical tradition. As an attempt to grasp the correct meaning conveyed by textual materials, it involves hermeneutic criticism as discussed in the current trend in the literature inspired by Heidegger and Gadamer (Palmer, 1969). The Advaita Vedānta, like many other schools of Indian thought, is dialectical in spirit, i.e., deeply involved in the justification and refutation (*maṇḍana–khaṇḍana*) of theses and antitheses (*pūrva pakṣa–uttara pakṣa*). This spirit is clearly reflected in the scholarly texts of Vedānta that examine in great detail one proposition after another in relation to alternative viewpoints of every serious school of thought known to the author. But the dialectics and hermeneutics in the Advaita Vedānta are not restricted to an impersonal analysis of embodied texts; they include a deeply personal scrutiny of the story of one's own life, so to speak. The Advaita Vedāntic approach is not merely analytical but also existential, and its existential emphasis is more directly and deeply personal than that of Heidegger and Sartre. The

personal transformation expected from the self-directed hermeneutics of the Advaita Vedāntic method lends itself to a cognitive psychological interpretation.

If a person was expected to engage in self-criticism and no guideline was provided, the exercise would turn out to be confusing and futile, or even disastrous. As noted, the Advaita Vedānta provides a simple rule of the thumb to guide critical self-examination: the true Self is that which remains unchanged; anything subject to change is the nonself. This means that one must keep convincing oneself that, in the ultimate analysis, one's own body, material possessions, social roles, friendships and other personal relationships, beliefs and attitudes, one's own name and nationality, almost everything with which one is normally identified is *not* the true Self. The reactions to such a demand are predictable. What the Advaita Vedānta is asking us to do is certainly difficult, but does it at least make any sense? How could one reject everything about the self that one "knows" oneself to be? How could one unlearn what one has learned to be true and reliable and disown what one has learned to love and to cherish, just because a quaint doctrine claims that it is good to do so? Regardless of what good will come out of it, it is not easy to disidentify with everything that one has learned to identify with; one's psychosocial identity is too deeply entrenched to be eradicated even with methods as drastic as "brainwashing" used by the Chinese in the forced ideological conversion of the American prisoners in the Korean war (Lifton, 1961). Assuming for a moment that a person realizes that he is not "truly" the son, the father, the friend, and other social selves that he is supposed to have been, does it mean that he must renounce the world and become a hermit?

Renunciation of social obligations (*saṁnyāsa*) and taking to a hermitage is indeed one of the ways suggested in the Advaita Vedāntic tradition, but not the only one. The other suggested way permits the aspirant to remain involved with a normal social life, but recommends nonattached action. (We will discuss the strategy of this approach in Chapter 6.) In either case, one aims at ultimately destroying, or at least making powerless, one's ego. This aim is attained, I think, through a systematic and thorough "cognitive deconstruction" of the ego. This is a complex issue that requires a detailed examination of the Advaita Vedāntic accounts of "meditation," or critical self-examination, in light of cognitive psychological concepts. We shall return to this topic in the next chapter.

The Advaita Vedāntic Approach Seen from a Western Viewpoint

There are obvious limitations to an interpretation in Western psychological terms of an ancient Eastern system of thought such as the Advaita Vedānta. It is impossible to capture its rigor and richness while viewing it within the relatively narrow confines of what is called a "theory of personality" in modern psychology. Nevertheless, I hope to have shown that the Advaita Vedānta presents, among other things, a conceptual model of a human being no less comprehensive and rigorous

than any of the contemporary theories of personality. Its central propositions are experientially verifiable; its views on individual differences and other matters are open to empirical investigation; and most of all, it provides a method of "applied psychology" aimed at the improvement of the human condition. Although their roots are ancient, the principles of a psychology according to the Advaita Vedānta need not be relegated to history, because their concerns—such as the search for an inner peace and the need to overcome egoism—are no less relevant today than in any other period of history.

The Advaita Vedānta developed as a way of life in a long and unbroken cultural tradition, and its view of the human beings, as well as its specific concepts, have been shaped by the history of its cultural context. When seen from the vantage point of contemporary personality theories, many of its features stand in sharp contrast: its extremely idealistic approach and its neglect of the various forms of psychopathology and of the other frailties of human character. The Advaita Vedānta is idealistic, both in the sense of an emphasis on ideas as opposed to "real," i.e., tangible objects, and also in the sense of cherishing high ideals to the relative neglect of the pressing problems of practical life. The ideal pursued by the Advaita Vedānta is the ultimate release (*mokṣa*) from the suffering and the attainment of bliss through self-realization. This ideal constitutes one of the four goals prescribed for men (*puruṣārtha*) in the Indian tradition. Trying to attain this goal is intrinsically an individual, rather than social, enterprise, and this is the province of Advaita Vedānta. As such, the Advaita Vedāntic view of personhood emphasizes individual as opposed to social aspects of persons, the latter being assigned to social disciplines dealing with ethics (*dharma śāstra*), economics and politics (*artha śāstra*), and the art and science of love (*kāma śāstra*). Small wonder, then, that when compared with many contemporary Western views of man—Erikson's or Skinner's, for instance—the Advaita Vedānta would seem to de-emphasize the social aspects of personality.

The Advaita Vedāntic approach often invites the charge of being individualistic, much to the chagrin of its protagonists. The critics charge that it neglects the interpersonal and group influences on human beings, and it seems to consider a person's station in society as determined by deeds in past life rather than shaped by individual and collective action in this life. As well, it seems to be unconcerned with disease, retardation, poverty, exploitation, and other such practical and social problems. It is concerned more with the attainment of individual salvation than with the creation of a utopian world. Many followers of the Advaita Vedānta are often unprepared to recognize this and tend to think it is a complete, or even a perfect, system. Some of its critics, on the other hand, fault it for neglecting the "common man" or the practical problems of the world, and expect the Advaita Vedānta to deliver what it did not promise or was not designed to accomplish. Most theories of personality present but partial accounts; only when taken together can they present a more comprehensive perspective. The Advaita Vedānta can be expected to fit the spectrum of available theories, complementing where many others are weak—in providing a method for attaining highest levels of fulfillment, for instance.

A Cross-Cultural Overview of Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic Views

Regardless of the many obvious differences in the historical and socio-cultural contexts in which the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic views originated, there are some remarkable commonalities. Both offer detailed, complex, and rich conceptual models of personhood. Both consider persons as individual beings who can think, feel, and act within natural and moral orders, although their conceptions of natural and moral orders are considerably different. For Erikson's model the central theme is the development and maintenance of a sense of unity in diversity of selves and of selfsameness in the face of changes across the life cycle. The central concern for both models is the principle of selfsameness in persons, although they speak of it in different terms. Both Erikson and Advaita Vedānta conceive of an agentic ego in some form or other and distinguish it from a center of awareness that lies beyond the changing thoughts about oneself and the world. In general, both aim at transforming the narrowly egotistic concerns of persons and inculcating wider humanistic concerns in their lives. There is thus a core set of closely compatible ideas and concerns that warrant a meaningful comparison between their views despite differences of various sorts that clearly distinguish the two approaches from each other.

Systematic comparison of theories of personality is not a new enterprise; at least for the Western theories of personality, Rychlak (1968, 1981) has proposed a metatheoretical framework that places personality theories on a continuum between the Lockean model of theory building at one pole and the Kantian at the other. To put it simply, according to Rychlak, the Lockean model involves a bottom-up approach that begins with empirically observable molecular units, such as stimulus–response as in behaviorism, and works gradually from concrete to abstract entities and simple to complex concepts. By contrast, the Kantian model involves a top-down approach that begins with a set of abstract constructs and expects to proceed both from abstract and complex to concrete and simple, as well as vice versa. Leaving aside for a moment the problems in extending such a model across cultures, it may be said that both Eriksonian and Advaita Vedānta models start with several highly complex and fairly abstract concepts and deal with individual person's concerns within their respective frameworks. This common feature of their theoretical frameworks makes the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic views more meaningfully comparable to the existential and subjectivistic approaches in contemporary personality theory (e.g., Binswanger, 1958; Boss, 1963)

than empiricist, objectivist, and quantitatively oriented theories (e.g., Cattell, 1959; Eysenck, 1970; Skinner, 1974). There is no ready-made metatheoretical framework for comparing or integrating theories across cultures, although there is some discussion in the literature of problems in comparative philosophy (Devaraja, 1967) and cross-cultural psychology (Ho, 1992). For want of such a framework, I shall use the rough guideline of focusing on the three types of issues that are often discussed in Western philosophy, namely, views of what there *is* (ontology), how it can be *known* (epistemology), and what it is all *for* (ethics/axiology). (It may be recalled that a similar framework was used in Chapter 2 in comparing Indian and Western perspectives on the affirmation and denial of the self.)

There are obvious differences in the ontological underpinnings of the Vedāntic viewpoint when compared with those of Erikson. While as a system of philosophy Vedānta has a clearly defined strongly monistic principle of Ātman–Brahman, Erikson's theory is based on a vaguely dualistic conception of reality derived from its Freudian background and Cartesian legacy. Anyone acquainted with the intellectual history of contemporary psychology would wonder how events in the Eriksonian "orders" of the psyche and soma would ever connect with each other, given that mind and matter have been conceived in strictly opposite terms and as totally exclusive domains. If a critic were to press for an answer, Erikson probably would have been as vague about the mind–body interaction as Freud (1940/1964), who once said that although he was sure about the brain and the acts of consciousness, "[e]verything that lies between these terminal points is unknown to us" (p. 144). The Advaita Vedānta avoids problems of interactionist dualism by being committed to a strictly monistic conception of reality. The Eriksonian domains of psyche and soma are somewhat parallel to the notions of *sattva* and *tamas*, the conceptions of "illumination" and "inertia" as strands of Prakṛti, which Vedāntists share with the Sāṅkhya system. Yet, the nature of interaction among the three strands of Prakṛti is as vague as that of the relations among the three Eriksonian "orders." Regardless of such problems of vagueness in the worldviews of Erikson and Advaita Vedānta, both viewpoints assume that humans are part of some kind of moral order, even as physicists must assume that there is an order in the cosmos, although the connection between the subatomic and intergalactic forces is yet unknown. If we assume that persons are creatures held responsible for the consequences of their actions and are also to be the subject matter of a systematic worldview, then it seems that the working assumption of some order in the moral domain is as imperative as is the assumption of orderliness in nature in the natural sciences. The Vedāntic notion of moral order defined in terms of the Law of Karma needs closer examination, and we shall return to a discussion of this issue in Chapter 6.

A radical difference exists in the epistemic underpinnings of the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic theories. The difference between them does not lie in adopting contrasting epistemologies, such as rationalism versus empiricism, as it does in

the case of the Piagetian and Skinnerian approaches. Indeed, while Advaita strongly and explicitly supports observation and argument as criteria of truth in appropriate domains of inquiry, Erikson seems to give them a silent consent. A more crucial point concerning the nature of psychological knowledge concerns the evidence *about* various states of consciousness and the epistemic status of evidence arising *from* the various states of consciousness. The mainstream of contemporary psychology follows the natural science approach in implicitly granting epistemic value only to experience during the wakeful state, ignoring all other states as possible sources of knowledge. Erikson, like Freud before him, accepts dream states and the unconscious as sources of knowledge about persons, especially about the drives and repressed desires and their influence on behavior. This is a significant departure from the established norm of natural science. This is exactly where the many schools of Indian thought such as the Vedānta are significantly different from most schools of Western thought, in that Indian epistemologies are open to insights from the altered states of consciousness.

It should be clear that the epistemic foundation of the Vedāntic views of the self, identity, and reality rests on what the Upaniṣads called the fourth state of consciousness. This is one of the so-called altered states of consciousness and is included in the concept of *samādhi* popular in the varieties of Yoga and other systems of meditation. In the West, it is common to include such states of consciousness under a common label, the "mystical" experience. There is a long tradition of mysticism in the West. Although it is well recognized that there are both secular as well as religious varieties of mysticism (Zaehner, 1957), mysticism has been closely associated not only with Eastern religious traditions, but also with Christianity (Underhill, 1911) and Judaism (Scholem, 1941). In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James (1902/1958) discussed the nature of mystical experiences in detail. Although this book earned a good deal of popularity, its topic has remained singularly unpopular in psychology. Apart from Carl Jung (1958, 1978), who wrote extensively about religion and Eastern mystical traditions, and Abraham Maslow (1964/1970b), who described the nature of "peak experiences," not many prominent psychologists published writings on this topic. It is only in the later phase of his thinking, when he was in his late 70s, that Erikson turned to the Biblical sources of insights on the nature of the *I* and showed some inclination toward mysticism. As we saw earlier, even Skinner, who in his scientific writings never even remotely recognized the relevance of religion, spiritual values, or mysticism for psychology, spoke of them only in his late 70s. I have heard my North American colleagues in psychology poking fun at such turning to religion or mysticism in old age as a sign of senility. At any rate, altered states of consciousness emerged as a topic of some interest in the United States in the late 1960s and the early 1970s (Tart, 1969). But this interest was associated with turning to the mystic traditions of the East in the heady days of the Vietnam War and psychedelic drugs and has been marginalized in psychology today.

Altered states of consciousness and varieties of mystical experience are relevant to psychology primarily because of their relevance to self-knowledge. Their neglect by psychologists cannot entirely be blamed on prevailing prejudices against religion or mysticism. An additional factor is that in the West, the so-called mystical experience or altered states of consciousness are not viewed as reproducible, and hence claims in regard to the attainment of a certain kind of self-knowledge are not considered verifiable. As we noted in connection with both the Kantian and Eriksonian views of the self as a Pure Ego or transcendental center of awareness, their nonverifiable nature poses an obstacle to their acceptability. By contrast, as can be seen from the foregoing account of the Advaita Vedānta, a stepwise procedure that is supposed to lead to the fourth state of consciousness is described in well-known and widely available texts. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Yogic techniques are also well laid out and literature on Yoga is widely available around the world. Interested persons with adequate preparation can in principle follow the prescribed steps and check for whether or not altered states are experienced as described by such texts. In addition, practical instruction has been available to interested and deserving inquirers through teachers (gurus) trained in a long, unbroken chain of teachers and students. That the Advaita Vedāntic and Yogic claims regarding the nature of the Self—Ātman or Puruṣa—are in principle falsifiable goes a long way in providing strength to the epistemological underpinnings of both of their approaches.

The Vedāntic approach to self-knowledge is clearly an outcome of a long tradition of the *contemplative* search for enlightenment that flourished in the Indian subcontinent, while its Western parallel was overshadowed by the rational empiricist approach of the European Enlightenment. By contrast, the Eriksonian approach to identity developed in a joint academic and clinical context nurtured by the post-Enlightenment view of knowledge and the Freudian era of psychotherapy. While in the academic context the implicit guiding principle was knowledge for its own sake, in the clinical context the goal was to relieve the anxieties and other symptoms of mildly and severely disturbed children and youth. Erikson complemented his clinical observations with longitudinal studies of "normal" and bright Harvard undergraduates, plus in-depth interpretive studies of the life histories of several exceptional men, such as Martin Luther, Mahatma Gandhi, and Thomas Jefferson. Having thus covered an exceptionally wide variety of personality types from severely disturbed youth to highly accomplished men over the decades of his long career, Erikson (1981) forayed, in his postretirement writings, into the even higher reaches of human concerns, namely, the existential search for "love, liberation, salvation" (p. 331). It is in this last step of the continuous expansion of his vision that Erikson makes contact with the higher levels of enlightenment that the Vedāntists set their eyes on. Looked at in this way, the Eriksonian and Vedāntic approaches may be seen as mutually complementary, the latter supplementing the upper end of the spectrum of putatively desirable states that the former was trying to reach. The complementarity of the two approaches deserves to be spelled out in some detail.

Becoming and Being: Contrasting but Complementary Models for Selfhood

Erikson's work on disturbed as well as exceptional persons resulted in a descriptive account and analysis of the passage of persons through the life cycle. His theory provides an account of "lives in progress," to use a phrase popularized by Robert White (1952/1966), a close colleague of Erikson who worked on similar issues. It seems to me that the word "progress" used in this context deserves to be taken rather seriously. Erikson does not use the term progress, but implies a persistent change in persons toward ever higher levels of "positive mental health." Erikson rightly recognizes that the sense of identity is forever revisable, for continual change is an inevitable aspect of living; we are constantly required to define ourselves in the face of the changing situations, whether we like it or not. According to Erikson, it is during late adulthood that many persons face the danger of stagnation, which is the opposite of progress. During old age one must realize that there is not much, if any, time left for progress, and the prospect of despair looms large. The danger of old age, Erikson (1982) warns, is in "mourning not only for time forfeited and space depleted but also ... for autonomy weakened, initiative lost, intimacy missed, generativity neglected—not to speak of identity potentials bypassed or, indeed, an all too limiting identity lived" (p. 63). But let us assume that a person has had several accomplishments to her credit and does not face such a danger. While such a person would avoid a sense of despair, one might ask, would she experience fulfillment? How much progress is enough?

As noted earlier in this chapter, according to Erikson (1974), the awareness of death when we are "deeply young or very old" tends to prompt the question of whether one has lived a wrong life—in service of wrong values, no matter how satisfying the progress might have been in the light of values cherished so far. The Advaita Vedāntists exhort that everyone should ask him- or herself this question about the ultimate value worth living for, and urge us to realize the external Being of the *I* that lies beyond the Becoming of the *Me* that is bound to be forever incomplete, whatever be the level of "progress" on any dimension. It is in the stronger valuation of Being and permanence over Becoming and change that the typical Indian perspectives such as Yoga and Vedānta are clearly distinguished from most Western views of personhood. In contemporary psychology, there are two types of contemporary personality theories that emphasize change. First, there are behaviorist theories that view individuals as infinitely malleable entities that change endlessly under the influence of environmental forces, and that deny even stable patterns or traits, let alone admit to anything permanent. Second, there are theories such as those of Maslow (1954/1970a) and Rogers (1961) that propose self-

actualization as a dominant growth principle, which drives individuals to seek the actualization of hidden potentials in the form of successively higher levels of accomplishment in one field or another. It makes sense to see the Eriksonian view of identity formation as a variation on the theme of self-actualization, which in turn implies the value of change over permanence that is strongly expressed as a persistent theme throughout the intellectual history of the West.

Heraclitus was perhaps the first one in the history of Western thought to emphasize change over permanence as a dominant cosmic principle. But the credit for translating this into human terms may go to Aristotle, whose concept of self-actualization implies a continuous actualization of potentials or hidden powers that could manifest themselves in increasingly higher levels of accomplishment. The Heraclitan theme recurs in a number of ways throughout the history of Western thought: in Hegel's view of a perpetual process of cosmic dialectics and of history's relentless march to the progress of human civilization; in the numerous European models of societal progress, well documented by Bury (1932/1960) in his *Idea of Progress*; in the popular conceptions of Darwinian evolution; in the notion of the unidirectional view of time in *Time's Arrow and Evolution* (Blum, 1962); and in Piaget's view of the perpetually evolving universe and of its knowledge. Against the background of such a set of allied themes, all emphasizing change over permanence, it makes sense to view Erikson's idea of human development as a series of unending changes guided by the dialectics of mutually opposing principles such as Trust versus Mistrust interacting with each other like Hegelian Thesis versus Antithesis. The *value* of change over stasis implied in such a view of human life is well expressed by Rogers (1961), who put it this way: "The good life is a *process*, not a state of being. It is a direction, not a destination" (p.186). This idea is fairly compatible with the Eriksonian notion of identity formation, a process wherein a person is always looking forward to becoming an anticipated self of some sort or other: an adult while young, being married while single, working while unemployed, and becoming happily retired while still working, and so on. Having a sense of identity, in Eriksonian terms, involves having a sense of direction and continuing to move toward a destination. And happiness, it would seem, lies more in trying than in reaching a destination.

Looked at from an Advaita Vedāntic point of view, this is fine as far as the pursuit of three of the four goals of life recommended in the Indian tradition, namely, the performing of one's duties or fulfilling obligations toward others (*dharma*, *ānṛṇya*), the production or acquisition of wealth (*artha*), and the sating of desires (*kāma*). The fourth goal the tradition recommends is the liberation (*mokṣa*) of the ego from the perpetual chain of action and its inevitable consequences. The twin goals of earning wealth and enjoying life with its means are generally covered by a single Sanskrit term, *abhyudaya*, meaning to rise or to prosper. This term conveys the spirit of what may be called "progress" in English, and its pursuit is considered to be as legitimate as the fulfilling of one's obligations

to others. Although quite legitimate, even mandatory, by traditional standards, such a pursuit is considered to be an unending journey. It is like the pursuit of anticipated selves, to put it in Eriksonian terms. Seen from an Advaita Vedāntic viewpoint, such a pursuit may be likened to chasing a horizon that recedes just as fast as one approaches it. The trouble with the pursuit of anticipated selves or practical goals is that all of these are abandoned either because they are already attained or because they are found unattainable or unworthy and are quickly replaced by other, more attractive, or "higher" goals and corresponding anticipated selves. While such replacement sustains hope for something or other, it also perpetuates the journey; one never arrives. To put it in terms of selfhood, the Eriksonian view of identity formation implies that one keeps on looking for a better and better image of the self, but the anticipated self, once actualized, turns out not to be good enough, or seems *not* to be a "true" self worth hanging on to forever. It is as if one keeps on inventing new self-images without ever discovering the true self. In the process of identity formation described by Erikson, one keeps on not only constructing new images of the self, but also keeps abandoning the self-images once cherished most highly. Abandoning a once-cherished self may be likened to courting symbolic death, while at the same time striving to be symbolically reborn in new incarnations.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, one should escape not only the endless cycle of birth and death across life cycles, but one should also sidestep the symbolic cycle of birth and death of selves or self-images in the course of the present life cycle. The journey to increasingly attractive future selves can and should come to an end with the discovery of the Ātman, the permanent (*nitya*) principle underlying continually changing images of the self. There is then no need for chasing new horizons for selfhood because the Self is, it is claimed, infinitely blissful by nature. Indeed, the discovery of the true nature of the self or Self-realization (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*) is often described as the attainment of *niḥśreyasa*, which literally means "having no better," or the *ultimate* bliss or *final* beatitude. Ironically, this metaphor of the journey is useful but deceptive, for the final abode is also the primal; indeed, insofar as one has always been what one is and will forever be, there is nowhere to *go*. There appears to be a need to travel only insofar as, and as long as, one labors under false conceptions of selfhood. But false images of the self are not easily shed; one does not normally arrive at the final abode suddenly by magic. As noted, an aspirant must acquire all the qualifications that are prerequisite for a proper study of the Ātman–Brahman, and then take the prescribed steps of "listening" or study of the formal principles of the Advaita philosophy and engaging in their critical examination and contemplation. This is a long and arduous task that might take years or decades, and may not be completed even in a lifetime.

During that long period of planned self-transformation, an aspirant must go through the various stages of the life cycle, whether these stages are conceived in

the traditional fourfold Indian way (the student, householder, preparing to retire, and renunciation), or in the eightfold Eriksonian way. Although the Advaita Vedāntic aspirant would expect the "journey" to end ultimately, she or he must keep moving along and ostensibly make some "progress" toward the Advaitic goal. During this journey, the aspirant must undergo the same kind of biologically guided transformation of the body that is inevitable for every member of the human species, and must face the same kinds of changing social expectations as others in her or his community and gender would face. It seems to me that, barring its culture-specific or "emic" limitations, the Eriksonian theory may account for the nature of the transformation of the ego that commonly occurs to most people. While Erikson's work offers a descriptive account of the most common process of the transformation of the life cycle and a prescribes ever higher levels of "positive mental health," the Advaita Vedāntic, Yogic, and other such theories offer alternative perspectives on how the transformation of the ego can be guided to a putatively ultimate state of Being beyond Becoming.

Cast as being aimed at the dialectically opposite goals of Becoming versus Being, the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic models might be seen as mutually exclusive approaches that must be taken on an either/or basis. However, treating them in a dichotomous way would be inappropriate. Being and Becoming or sameness and change, like self and other, constitute a dialectical pair such that one defines the other and derives its very meaning from that other. Thus, in Advaita Vedānta, making progress toward self-realization makes sense despite the claim that self-realization implies the attainment of a state beyond progress. So too in the Eriksonian vision, it makes sense to point at the eternal and indescribable "I am that I am" despite its emphasis on endless change. Regardless of their differing emphases on change versus sameness, the Eriksonian and Advaita Vedāntic perspectives are complementary.

Notes

1. In the first stanza of the 19th chapter of the verse section of his *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Śaṅkara (1973) uses the following words alluding to a medical metaphor:

   tṛṣṇājvaranāśakāraṇaṁ cikitsitaṁ jñānavirāgabheṣajam |

   For an English translation of the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, see Potter (1981, pp. 217–254).
2. It is likely that Hall and Lindzey might have decided to delete the chapter of Eastern theories either because of their decision to produce a simpler, lower-level text, or because of the kind of response they received from their peers. A review of 1978 edition of Hall and Lindzey's text illustrates the cold, or even negative, reaction of psychologists to the expansion of the cultural horizons of their text. In a review published in *Contemporary Psychology*, the official review journal of the American Psychological Association, Hochreich (1979) questions Hall and Lindzey's wisdom in including a chapter on an Eastern theory. "Given Hall and Lindzey's stated criteria for selection, the 'importance' and 'distinctiveness' of a theory," sayd Hochreich, "one can easily arrive at more sensible choices" (p. 753).

3. The intellectual background of Erikson's work is available from many good sources: Erikson's (1975) own autobiographical account in his book, *Life History and the Historical Moment* (pp. 17–47), in a biography of Erikson by Robert Coles (1970), and in David Rapaport's (1959) brief introduction to Erikson's *Identity and the Life Cycle*.
4. For a list of the developmental tasks of adolescence in Erikson's own words, see Erikson (1959, p. 112). What is given here is a modified and expanded list in the light of Erikson's own and other works on this topic.
5. Erikson quotes these words from *The Process of Education*, by Jerome S. Bruner (1960), a Harvard psychologist well known for his studies in cognition. Although Erikson seems to remain largely within the psychoanalytical framework, his occasional references to the work of cognitivists like Piaget and Bruner indicate, in my opinion, a closer compatibility of his model with cognitive theories than is often realized. It is this link of his model with cognitivism that I wish to follow up in the chapter on self-as-knower.
6. Professor James Marcia has pointed out to me (personal communication) that the importance often attached to the role of formal operations in identity formation may be exaggerated. Formal operations might neither be a necessary nor sufficient condition for identity development.
7. See Paranjpe (1975, Ch. 4) for an illustrative case study.
8. According to Professor James Marcia (personal communication), data supporting Eriksonian theory of identity formation have been reported from the following countries: the United States and Canada, Mexico, India, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Kuwait, Israel, South Africa, Nigeria, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Finland, United Kingdom, and New Zealand.
9. Readers acquainted with the history of social psychology would remember that in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno et al., 1950), a landmark study guided by psychoanalytic theory and social psychological methodology, the origins of prejudice were traced to the habitual projection of anger against a disciplining father onto out-groups.
10. For an English translation of Śaṅkara's commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms, see V. M. Apte (1960) or Radhakrishnan (1960/1968).
11. This concise list of features of the essentially indescribable Brahman is a translation of Sarvajñātman's (1972) words in *Saṁkṣepaśārīraka*, stanza No. 173, which are as follows:

    nityaḥ śuddho buddhamuktasvabhāvaḥ |
    satyaḥ sūkṣmaḥ san vibhuścādvitīyaḥ |
    ānandābdhiryaḥ paraḥ so' hamasmi |
    pratyagdhāturnātra saṁśītirasti ||
12. For a concise account of the Upaniṣadic theory of creation, see Vidyāraṇya's (1982) *Pañcadaśī* (Ch. 2), or P. Deussen's (1987) *The System of the Vedānta* (Ch. 17).
13. For an English translation, see *Hymns of the Ṛg Veda* (Griffith, 1963, Vol. 2, pp. 575–576).
14. Sometimes a third, still lower, level of reality (*prātibhāsika sattā*) is suggested. It is obtained when something purely illusory, such as a mirage or an event in a dream is taken to be real.
15. In this connection, Dasgupta quotes the following words from Dharmarāja's (1972) *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*: abādhitārthaviṣayajñānatvam (p. 4).
16. This is my paraphrase of the following words of V. S. Abhyankar (1928/1968):

    abādhitaviṣayākārāntaḥkaraṇavṛttirhi prametyucyate | (p. 21).
17. Śaṅkara's (1978, 18.66) words in this regard are as follows:

    na hy śrutiśatamapi śīto'gniraprakāśo veti bruvatprāmāṇyamupaiti |
18. These words are used by Radhakrishnan (1927/1931, Vol. 2, p.613) with reference to Sarvajñātman's characterization of *mokṣa*, or liberation, in *Saṁkṣepaśārīraka* (1.67) (see Sarvajñātman, 1972).
19. I wish to thank Dr. Gaya Charan Tripathi for pointing this out to me.

20. See Note 6, Chapter 2.
21. ātmendriyamanoyuktaṁ bhoktetyāhurmanīṣiṇah I *Kaṭha* Upanisad (3.4).
22. puruṣo jīvaḥ kṣetrajño bhoktetiparyāyaḥ I (Śaṅkara, 1978, 13.20).
23. māyāṁ tu prakṛtiṁ vidyāt I *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (4.10).
24. eko devaḥ sarvabhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarvavyāpī sarvabhūtāntarātmā I
karmādhyakṣaḥ sarvabhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo nirgunasca I I
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25. For an English translation of Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms, see J. H. Woods (1914/1972).
26. The Advaita Vedāntist characterization of the Self as transcending the person as one who knows, feels, and wills appears in many writings. See, for example, Śaṅkara (1978, 13.1 & 13.20; 1980, 1.1.1), and Abhyankar (1928/1968, pp. 19–21).
27. In the *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad (3.1.5), the *ātman* is described as "jyotirmayaḥ," meaning full of light, and in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (4.3.7), the *puruṣa* is described as "vijñānamayaḥ" and "hṛdyantarjyotiḥ," meaning full of knowledge and a light in the heart.
28. For a detailed discussion of the Advaita Vedānta doctrine of superimposition, see T. M. P. Mahadevan (1985).
29. ko' yamadhyāso nāmeti I ucyate—smṛtirūpaḥ I Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1).
30. Śaṅkara's view of the human condition is movingly expressed in a couple of short poems, the *Dvādaśapañjarikā Stotram* and the *Carpaṭapañjarikā Stotram*. Therein he expresses his deeply felt disdain for the emptiness of the mundane life and his yearning for a release from *saṁsāra*. For original texts and English translations of these poems, see Mahadevan (1980). In the opinion of S. K. Belwalkar (1929, pp. 221–222), these poems are "very probably" the authentic creations of Śaṅkara.
31. The four major goals of life as envisioned in the Indian tradition are: doing one's duties toward fellow beings (*dharma*), acquiring wealth or means to fulfilling needs and desires (*artha*), fulfilling desires (*kāma*), and seeking release from karmic bondage (*mokṣa*).
32. According to my colleague, Professor James Marcia (personal communication), an accomplished psychotherapist who read this account in a draft form, "Most real psychotherapy is not 'administered.' Actually [it is] more like this."

4

Self-as-Knower

The Psychology of Cognition

The first part of this chapter is devoted to an overview of prominent contemporary perspectives on self and identity in relation to cognition. The key assumption to be examined here is that the self-as-knower involves the cognitive structures and processes operating within the individual at any given time. In cognitive terms, I *am* the way I get to know the world. The cognitive structures and processes involved in processing information do their work silently, so to speak, meaning that usually we are not aware of them. At a conscious level, the cognitive aspect of the self may be said to involve the beliefs and opinions with which one has become identified. My current beliefs and opinions provide guidelines for me to judge events, issues, and persons that I encounter in daily life. They are also a part of my social identity insofar as my opinions and attitudes define my place in the world around me, and people identify me in terms of my opinions and attitudes. However, cognitive structures and processes, as well as beliefs and opinions, are not acquired and maintained once and for all. They are bound to change from time to time, and hence cannot account for the selfsameness of the *I*.

The second part of this chapter presents the Advaita Vedāntic views of the self-as-knower. First, the Advaita Vedāntic conceptions of knowledge, knower, and known are explained in relation to the Advaita Vedāntic view of reality. This is followed by an interpretation of Advaita Vedāntic views of perception and cognition in the language and idiom of cognitive constructionism. It is pointed out that Advaita Vedāntists consider the process of knowing as always in need of adjuncts, or enabling conditions such as sensory capacities, that belong to the person or *jīva*. Since the person keeps changing in relation to the changing world, the self-as-knower must keep changing as well. As such, the Advaita Vedāntists cannot account for the selfsameness of the *I* in terms of the self-as-knower any more than can the cognitive psychologists. However, the Advaita Vedāntists postulate a transcendental Self to account for the selfsameness in persons, and suggest critical self-examination as a means to directly experience it. It is suggested that the self-

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examination or "meditation" prescribed by Advaita Vedānta is a way of cognitively "deconstructing" one's ego.

Some Contemporary Perspectives: The Self as Cognitive Structures and Processes

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) has been one of the most influential figures in the field of cognitive psychology in recent times. His ideas are particularly important for us because, as we shall see later, his view of Being and Becoming (which recognizes only the latter) presents a unique instance of similarity and contrast when compared with the Advaita Vedāntic views of self and cognition. We begin our discussion with a brief outline of Piaget's view of cognition.

Piaget's Views of Cognition and the Self[1]

Piaget had an exceptionally broad background in diverse disciplines, which he brought to bear on the central issue of his research, *genetic epistemology*. Trained as a biologist, Piaget became interested in philosophy, especially epistemology, along with logic, mathematics, linguistics, cybernetics, systems theory, and developmental psychology. What he presents through a unique combination of such diverse fields of study is a general theory of the structure of natural and artificial (i.e., logicomathematical) systems, conceived as dynamic or "constructive" processes (Turner, 1973, p. 351). He uses the concept of *structure* to study the origin and growth of knowledge not only in developing human minds, but also in the history of humanity. Piaget argued that since no records are available on how Neanderthal man thought, we are restricted to observing the origin of knowledge in human development rather than in the history of humanity (Piaget, 1970a, p. 13). There is an echo here of the well-known idea from the history of biology: ontogeny *recapitulates* phylogeny. That is to say, an individual's development through the life cycle retraces the same steps that the species may have undergone during the course of its evolution.

There is no need for us to discuss the long history of the theories of evolution and development except for the principle of *epigenesis*, which is central to the developmental theories of Piaget and Erikson. As noted in the previous chapter, this principle suggests that the development of an individual in its life cycle proceeds in a stepwise fashion so that something qualitatively new comes about at each stage. Piaget's work shows how new cognitive structures and processes emerge stage by stage in a manner *analogous* to the biological principle of epigenesis. Moreover, it goes beyond charting the course of cognitive development; it seeks to understand the nature of knowledge as such. What Piaget offers, therefore, is an epistemology. His theory of knowledge differs from traditional

"philosophical" epistemology in being empirically verifiable. While the traditional epistemologies tend to view knowledge as a fact or a state, Piaget (1970/1972b, p. 2) views it as a *process*. He rejects the empiricist view of knowledge as discovery of something already existing in the external world, and also rejects the rationalist view of knowledge as preexisting in *a priori* form inside the subject. Instead, he views knowledge as a matter of continuous construction "since in each act of understanding, some invention is involved" (Piaget, 1970a, p. 77).

As a process, knowledge originates in the adaptive activity of the individual. The newborn is biologically endowed with formative structures that enable the infant's sensorimotor activities such as sucking, pulling, pushing, and so on. Such activities are repetitive and extend to a wide array of objects and situations such that, in due course, a common underlying pattern or *scheme* is transposed from one situation to another. The infant tends to incorporate or *assimilate* all kinds of new objects encountered in the environment within existing schemes. But in so doing, the original scheme tends to change itself or *accommodate* to a greater or lesser degree. For instance, the pattern of the baby's specific actions in sucking the mother's breast are modified as necessary in sucking a thumb. Piaget (1970b, pp. 707–708) insists that assimilation is never present without its counterpart, accommodation, and that there is always a need to attain an *equilibrium* between the two. Assimilation is essential to provide continuity and stability, but if there is only assimilation and no change, the patterns of action would become rigid and nonadaptive. If, however, accommodation outweighs assimilation, the individual will be too malleable and will be assimilated into the environment. Piaget holds that all organisms are capable of regulating the equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation in the same way that living bodies are able to regulate the rate of metabolism or maintain a balance between production and consumption of sugar and insulin, for instance.

Following a general systems model, Piaget views a hierarchy of nested systems and subsystems at biochemical, cognitive–psychological, and formal or logicomathematical levels, conceiving a continual interplay of processes and structures at each level of organization. Increasingly complex structures are constructed in the ongoing interaction of the self-regulating organism through a continual equilibration of assimilation and accommodation. What drives this process of cognitive construction is the functional activity of the individual manifest in physical movement of limbs and concrete objects at the beginning of life, and gradually transforming into increasingly abstract *operations*. As noted, the structure of activity appears in the beginning in the form of *schemes*, i.e., patterns of sensorimotor activity that are common across situations and objects. From these relatively concrete structures, more abstract forms emerge, starting with elementary *schemata* (plural of "schema"), or simplified mental images, and going on to increasingly abstract signs and symbols. In a series of publications,

Piaget and his associates have provided a detailed account of the stage-by-stage transformation of cognitive functions of growing children from infancy through adolescence. Piaget postulates the following major stages of cognitive development along with substages of each: *sensorimotor*, *preoperational*, *concrete operational*, and propositional, or *formal operational* (see Piaget, 1972a, Ch. 1).

Piaget views "operations" as internalized (i.e., symbolic) *actions*. A child may first learn to subtract by actually taking away and counting concrete objects such as marbles, but she may later learn to substitute imaginary objects or symbols in lieu of real objects in the operation of subtracting. As cognitive development proceeds, operations tend to become increasingly more abstract. At the higher levels of development, the individual is able to perform "operations on operations," e.g., perform classification of classifications or comprehend theories of theorizing. Piaget postulates an invariable sequence of stages and substages of cognitive development analogous to the epigenetic principle, just as Erikson postulates the stages of psychosocial development. The chronological expression of the stages is viewed as contingent on facilitating or nonfacilitating environmental factors. Piaget (1970/1972b, pp. 52–57) claims that the hypothesis of invariable sequence of stages is supported by empirical studies across cultures, and cites evidence from studies conducted around the world.

Here, as in our discussion of Erikson's theory, we will not deal with the issue of empirical validation, but will focus instead on some theoretical and metatheoretical implications of the Piagetian perspective for the study of self and identity. To that end, we need to focus on Piaget's views of the self as subject and object, knower and the known, with particular reference to the issue of change and selfsameness. In *Structuralism*, Piaget (1968/1970c) defines the subject as the "center of functional activity" (p. 69). "[T]he sensori-motor or intelligent subject is active and himself constructs his structures, by operations of reflective abstraction" (Piaget, 1968/1970c, pp. 59–60). As pointed out by Turner (1973), this means that the subject is the "locus of the dynamics of the constructive process" (p. 357), which is always in flux, engaged as it must be in ongoing assimilation of objects in experience in the existing schema, while at the same time accommodating them as necessary. "The subject exists," says Piaget (1968/1970c), "because ... the being of structures consists in their coming to be, that is, their being 'under construction' " (p. 140). This implies that the *subject*, as knower, is always changing. At any given moment it would consist of the cognitive structures and functions that may have evolved in the course of development till that moment. Although Piaget talks of the *object* that the subject must deal with, he does not give a very clear account of it. Turner (1973) infers from Piaget's writings that "[t]he object, insofar as it can be acted upon, and therefore 'known' or related to by the subject, is also an indeterminate entity whose definition is always relative to the actions of the subject and the level of structure upon which they are based" (p. 357).

Such relativistic conceptions of the subject and object, knower and known, would seem too uncertain and risky to someone like Piaget who is interested in an objective, scientific understanding of reality. Given his phenomenological leanings (it was Piaget who taught us how to look at the child's reality from a her or his viewpoint) and his constructionism, Piaget would appear to adopt a subjectivist perspective. But in fact it is quite the opposite. As remarked by Turner (1973): "In spite of the conventional associations of the term 'subject' with the consciousness of individual human beings, it is clear that Piaget's concept of the subject has nothing to do with individuality of consciousness—or, for that matter, humanity" (p 359). To understand how so, we need to look at Piaget's concept of "epistemic subject" as opposed to a "psychological subject." In the words of Beth and Piaget (1966):

> There is the "psychological subject," centered in the conscious ego whose functional rôle is incontestable, but which is not the origin of any structure of general knowledge; but there is also the "epistemic subject" or that which is common to all subjects at the same level of development, whose cognitive structures derive from the most general mechanisms of the coordination of actions. (p. 308)[2]

In *Structuralism*, Piaget (1968/1970c) suggests that the "general mechanisms" of the coordination of action are common to the "average" subject. "So average, in fact, that one of the most instructive methods for analyzing its actions is to construct, by means of machines or equations, models of 'artificial intelligence' for which cybernetic theory can furnish the necessary and sufficient conditions" (p. 69).

If, indeed, the cognitive constructions of average human subjects could be modeled by machines, the processes of knowing must be universal and *impersonal*, and Piaget (1968/1970c) was aware that his account of a general and impersonal epistemic subject would make the "*subject* disappear" (p. 139). Did Piaget imply that some kind of Kantian universal principles of understanding are at work in the minds of ordinary people? Does he accept the Kantian view of the "I" as an "absolute subject?" Despite his proclaimed sympathy for Kantianism, Piaget does not accept either of these Kantian ideas. As to the transcendental ego, he says that "the whole trouble has been, from Plato to Husserl, that this transcendental subject has been changing appearance all the time but with no improvements other than those due to the progress of science" (Piaget, 1967/1971, p. 362). While he is sure about the progress of science, Piaget does not think that it is attained by basing itself on firm "foundations" of any sort. Despite his fascination with formalisms, Piaget repeatedly refers to Kurt Gödel's theorem, which proves that no logico-mathematical system can be self-sufficient or completely internally consistent without subordination to a higher-order system.[3] In Piaget's view, the implication of this is far-reaching: there are no prospects for an absolute or complete system of knowledge—*ever*. To quote Piaget (1970b):

> [L]ogical empiricism attempts to reduce physical knowledge to perceptual states and logicomathematical knowledge to laws of an ideal language.... Now, these are two highly conflicting hypotheses, first, because physical experience rests on actions and not only on perceptions and always supposes a logicomathematical framework drawn from the general coordination of actions (of such kind that operationalism of Bridgman must be completed by that of Piaget!). Second, logicomathematical knowledge is not tautological but constitutes a structural organization drawn from reflective abstraction of the general coordination between our actions and our operations.
>
> But, most importantly, it is impossible that epistemology is static in point of view, because all scientific knowledge is in perpetual evolution, including mathematics and logic itself [of which the constructivist aspect has become evident since the theorems of Gödel have shown the impossibility of a theory to be self-sufficient (complete)—therefore, the necessity of always constructing "stronger" ones; from whence finally the inevitable limits of formalization!] As Natrop[4] said in 1910: "... science evolves continually.... All being (or object) that science attempts to fix dissolves in the current of becoming.... Therefore that which can and must be sought is the law of this process." (Piaget, 1970b, pp. 730–731)

Piaget is absolutely convinced that nothing can be static, immovable, or permanent: no system of knowledge, no transcendental "I," not even God. In *Structuralism*, he says: "But God himself has, since Gödel's theorem, ceased to be motionless. He is the living God, more so than heretofore, because he is unceasingly constructing ever 'stronger' systems" (1968/1970c, p. 141). Like God Himself, what any of us—whether as ordinary persons or as scientists—can do is to perpetually struggle to replace current systems of thought with increasingly "stronger" systems.

A few critical comments on the Piagetian perspective should now be in order. Piaget, like other constructivists, shuns absolutism typical of logical positivism. He views all knowing as conditioned by the state of the knower, as determined by the knower's level of cognitive development in his or her own life and also by the level of development of knowledge in the history of humankind. Piagetian relativism is fairly consistent with that of hermeneutics; both view knowledge as conditioned by "preunderstanding" and also as perpetually open to reinterpretation.

An important problem with the Piagetian approach is its overemphasis on the abstract and generalized processes of knowing in the so-called "epistemic subject" to the *relative* neglect of the relationship between cognition and the self in concrete, personal, and "real life" situations of human beings. Turner (1973, p. 354) rightly suggests that Piaget's theory of "decentered" logical structures must be supplemented by a theory of "recentered" structures belonging to concrete functioning persons. Although impersonal cognitive structures of sorts are conceivable as aspects of artificial intelligence working through advanced computers, in human beings they are lodged with multiple selves united around the center of awareness along with an Eriksonian "sense of identity." But in the analysis of abstract and general cognitive structures presented by Piaget, there is no place for the "person as a whole." Piaget rarely considers the spontaneous, creative individual, and he seems to ignore the often powerful influence of emotions on human cognitive processes. Such things as the lived experience of human beings, their deeply personal concerns for the unknown future, or their fear of death, are distinctly lacking in Piaget's work. It is no surprise, indeed, that Piaget is rarely recognized as a personality theorist, while Erikson is quite often recognized as such.

Interestingly, Piaget's impersonal stance does not render his view of humans mechanistic like Skinner's. On the contrary, he considers humans as moral agents and has pioneered psychological studies of moral development. However, Piagetian studies of moral behavior would seem to overemphasize cognitive factors, making it appear that resolving moral dilemmas is a matter of "cool" reason. If one takes a Piagetian or Kohlbergian approach to moral behavior, the deeply emotional turmoil of St. Augustine or the existential passion of Kierkegaard would appear to be unnecessary, if not simply pathological.

Looking at the Piagetian perspective cross-culturally, I see the Piagetian versus Kierkegaardian views of moral dilemmas to be an instance of the typical Western polarization along the analytical–existential dimension that is difficult to find within the Indian tradition. I also notice in Piaget's approach the primacy of Becoming over Being. This is not to say that valuing change and Becoming over permanence and Being makes it exclusively "Western." Piaget himself refers to Plato and Husserl—prominent Western advocates of Being—while indicating his preference for Becoming over Being. However, the fact that he criticizes them (rightly or wrongly) for giving "changing visions of the permanent" and that he cites lack of "progress" in rejecting them indicate Piaget's fascination with the idea of progress and his emphasis on Becoming. As noted in Chapter 1, the idea of "progress" has been a pervasive theme of Western civilization; its influence is such that any talk of permanence as a value is viewed with suspicion—even as environmentalists are often branded as "enemies of progress." In any event, I do not see Piaget's view of the continually evolving character of human knowledge of the world as being at odds either with Quinian or Advaita Vedāntic views of knowledge, for both emphasize the openness of such knowledge to falsification. It is, however, at odds with the Advaita Vedāntic view of experience of the *Self*, which they claim as absolute and not evolving. But the experience of the Self is said to be obtained when the flow of ideas in the mind is brought to a standstill. However, the Yogic or Advaita Vedāntic ways of knowing the Self by stalling the stream of consciousness would seem odd to Piaget (1967/1971), who once raised the question of "whether one can possibly jump over one's own shadow and thus reach the 'Subject' in oneself without its remaining 'human, too human' " (p. 362).

Neo-Piagetian Views of Self and Identity

Although Piaget did not focus on studies of self and identity, several neo-Piagetian scholars published numerous studies in this area in the 1970s and 1980s.

Prominent in this respect is the work of Kohlberg and Gilligan (1971/1974), Kegan (1982), Harter (1988), and Chandler (Chandler, Boyes, Ball, & Hala, 1987; Ball & Chandler, 1989). A common feature of research in this field is the combination of Piagetian concepts and methods with theories of self and identity derived from James, Cooley, Mead, and Erikson. Instead of discussing the depersonalized Piagetian conception of the "epistemic subject," most neo-Piagetians try to account for the *structures* and *functions* that account for the individuals' conceptions of who they are, or have been. All of them bring to bear considerable amounts of data based on longitudinal and/or cross-sectional studies of the conceptions of the self and identity among children and adolescents. A common feature of the neo-Piagetian studies is a typically constructionist approach that views the conceptions of the self as a matter of "making" or "inventing" meaning rather than discovery of truth.

As can be expected, the various scholars of this group define the self somewhat differently. Kegan, for instance, conceives of a self in a "region" between events and individual reaction to them. It is in such a region that meanings are made, and "[t]he zone of mediation where meaning is made is variously called by personality psychologists the 'ego,' the 'self,' the 'person' " (Kegan, 1982, pp. 2–3). The typical Piagetian view of cognition or knowledge as "activity" or process is quite apparent in most neo-Piagetian studies. But, one might ask, whose activity is it and what does it produce? Although Kegan does not pose such questions, Harter (1988, p. 44) implicitly answers them by conceiving the self as both the *constructor* and *constructed*, and by considering them to be the counterparts, respectively, of the Jamesian "I–self," or self-as-knower, and the "Me-self," or the self-as-known. Although the neo-Piagetians occasionally talk about the subject and the object even as Piaget did, they do not tend to make too fine a distinction between self-as-subject and self-as-object. It is quite common among them, however, to refer to the self in the dual sense of cognitive structure *and* function, implying, respectively, the known and the knower. The neo-Piagetians seem to take for granted Piaget's idea of the incessant equilibration of the cognitive processes of assimilation and accommodation, and thereby assume that the self is always in the making. For instance, Kegan chooses the expression "the evolving self," suggesting the constantly changing nature of the self, and schematically represents the process of change as an endless spiral or a helix. Given such assumptions of a constantly changing selfhood, how do neo-Piagetians account for selfsameness?

Both Chandler and Harter address this issue most directly in terms of the Piagetian notion of *conservation*. As Piaget's famous studies show, children at an early age often think that if one pours liquid from a tall, narrow beaker into a shorter one, it decreases in amount. However, in the course of their cognitive development they begin to understand that, despite the "transformation" in shape, the amount of liquid remains the same, or is "conserved." This Piagetian finding

suggests the hypothesis that children learn to infer the continued sameness of persons in an analogous manner as something conserved despite transformation of sorts, such as a quantity of water poured from a tall glass to a short one. To test such a hypothesis, Chandler and associates (1987) asked children to say whether Scrooge,[5] portrayed *differently* as a comic strip character in his Christmas Eve and Christmas Day incarnations, was the *same* person before and after. Most children judged him to be the same person, although their accounts of sameness varied according to their level of cognitive development. While preoperational children inferred sameness on the basis of bits and pieces that remained unchanged ("he is the same Scrooge because he wears the same clothes," or "has the same looks"), concrete operational subjects inferred sameness in terms of some causal consequence (a kernel of goodness simply germinated overnight, for instance).

In her studies, Susan Harter (1988) tries to explain how children going from elementary school to junior high school often attempt to conserve their self-esteem by changing either their competence hierarchies (e.g., by trying to raise their performance levels where they discover shortcomings) or their importance hierarchies (by considering the areas of deficiency to be less important). Thus, what is involved in the maintenance of a sense of selfsameness is the construction and continual reconstruction of selfhood. Ball and Chandler (1989) found that adolescents differ widely in the way they construct a sense of selfsameness. There are significant *qualitative* differences across individuals in the grounds on which claims of continuity in themselves as persons are based. For instance, psychiatrically hospitalized adolescents generally gave less mature warrants of personal continuity than those in a matched sample of "normal" adolescents. At the same time, adolescents from comparable backgrounds who were judged as high risk for suicide were "generally at complete loss as to how to justify the conclusion of their own or others' persistent identity across time" (Ball & Chandler, 1989, p. 272). Ball and Chandler are rightly cautious in interpreting their data, noting that their correlational studies cannot indicate what "causes" suicidal tendencies among adolescents. Nevertheless, their observations are highly suggestive of the existential significance of the attainment of a reasonable basis of selfsameness; its lack may in some instances lead to dreadful doubts regarding one's continued existence as a person in the future.

By way of critical comment it may be noted that the neo-Piagetian accounts such as those indicated above are suggestive of William James's conclusion that "the identity found by the *I* in its *me* is only a loosely construed thing, just like that which any outside observer might find in the same assemblage of facts" (James, 1890/1983, p. 352). In other words, what the neo-Piagetian studies try to demonstrate is not the continued existence of the self-as-subject; they simply describe the various types of processes that are commonly involved in the attempts of a continually changing "knower" (i.e., the existing cognitive structures) in making sense of the ever-changing world. What they account for is not the selfsameness of

the self-as-knower but the "conservation" of various aspect of the self-as-known. Indeed, the neo-Piagetian studies effectively demonstrate that neither the self-as-knower nor the self-as-known are permanent. While the former is assumed to be necessarily and continually changing on theoretical grounds, the continual changes in the latter is a fact of commonplace observation. Moreover, what the neo-Piagetian studies show is that the sense of selfsameness is not only cognitively constructed, it is based on frequently changing grounds that are often more like rationalizations than reasons.

Broughton and Riegel (1977) make an interesting observation about the Piagetian developmental theorists against the background of their intellectual history: "Such theorists follow Hegel's assumption that the real is rational consciousness, and that development *is* the development of thought. Development is in fact taken as the defining quality of life and of the human self" (p. 156). Given the fusion of Hegelian and Darwinian thought in the work of Mead, Baldwin, Dewey, and other similar theorists of the early 20th century, they point out that: "Self-as-Organism is a precarious identity-in-difference. Self and Development are in constant tension, since the Self is viewed as existing only in its own self-negation—in its Becoming rather than its Being" (Broughton & Riegel, 1977, p. 156). They also point out that the "final stage" of cognitive development and moral reasoning as conceived by Piaget and Kohlberg gives an illusory impression of stability. It is illusory because, inasmuch as Piaget accepts Gödel's proof of incompleteness of all formal and axiomatic systems of thought, the " 'Final' stages must ... always stand as provisional" (p. 156). To put it in different words, in Piagetian and neo-Piagetian approaches, the self, as both the knower and known, is seen as necessarily subject to continual changes, and as such, the issue of sameness remains elusive.

To put this into the context of Advaita Vedānta, it may be noted that Advaita Vedāntists insist that the self as both knower and known changes, even as the neo-Piagetian studies imply. They dismiss the impression of sameness in the self-as-known as illusory; the cognitive "conservation" of the *me* is for them a rationalization rather than a reasoned fact. The Advaita Vedāntists account for the sameness of the self in terms of the self-as-subject that is experienced in the transcognitive zone of consciousness—a territory that seems to be out of bounds for Piaget and most Piagetians.

George Kelly: The Self as "Personal Construct"

George Kelly (1905–1967) did not approve of the traditional trichotomy of cognition, conation, affect, nor did he consider his theory to be phenomenological (Kelly, 1969, pp. 69, 219). Yet his approach is often considered phenomenological, since it emphasizes the individuals' perspective on reality as the most significant determiner of action (see Kelly, 1969, pp. 270–271). He is also considered a cognitive constructivist insofar as the notions of "construal" and "construction" central to his theory refer to what are usually called cognitive processes. As noted in Chapter 1, Kelly (1955) is a realist and a constructive alternativist in that he holds that the "universe is really existing" (p. 6), and that "there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world" (p. 15). He is one of the very few contemporary theorists who state their axioms and their corollaries clearly and up front. Kelly's fundamental postulate is that "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the way he *anticipates* events, and its first corollary is that 'a person anticipates events by *construing* their replications' " (p. 103, emphasis added). Construing is always guided by *dichotomous* "constructs," or reference axes, that allow us to compare and contrast events with each other and thereby help make sense of the world (Kelly, 1969, p. 295). The reference axes or constructs like "self versus other," "my self versus my ideal self," "probable versus impossible," "safe versus dangerous," or "good versus evil," for instance, allow a person to place events in reference to oneself, assess their desirability, and thereby help prepare their prediction and control. For Kelly, the prediction and control of events is a goal common to scientists as well as "ordinary" persons, and science and personal constructs are its means. Personal constructs, like constructs of the various sciences, are applicable only to a finite range of events rather than to reality as a whole, and "all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision and replacement" (Kelly, 1955, p. 15).

As in the case of the Piagetian schemata, the Kellyian constructs are always in the making. In facing a new situation, such as making a new acquaintance, individuals tend to "circumspect," or look around, and invoke a wide range of familiar constructs, a host of bipolar trait names like "warm versus cold," or "friendly versus hostile," for instance, to assess whether the person is likely to be congenial or harmful, and so on. Those constructs that seem obviously useless in framing the situation are ruled out or "preempted," and the framework of selected constructs is then used as the basis for exercising control on own behavior, such as either neglecting the newcomer or inviting her for a party next week, as might seem appropriate. As life events unfold, a person's construction of the surrounding world is continually revised in cycles of *circumspection* (exploring and construing alternatives), *preemption* (ruling out some alternatives as irrelevant), and *control* (as per chosen alternatives). If the personal constructs prove adequate in controlling relevant events in the light of results of past construal and action, the individual may "tighten" or consolidate the framework, or perhaps "loosen" it so as to make it open to revision. The parallel between this Kellyian account of the processes of construal and the Piagetian concepts of assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration should be quite clear.

Kelly was opposed to the conceptualization of an entity such as an ego or a self. But he speaks of the self as both a construct or frame for comparing items and as a datum or an item to be rated in the context of other constructs (Kelly, 1955, p.

131). Thus, insofar as "self" or self-related terms often provide dichotomous axes (like "self versus nonself," or "self versus other") for the assessment of events, the self can be thought of as a construct. On the other hand, self can equally be one among the many persons or "data" that one evaluates on dichotomous constructs like "warm versus cold," "intelligent versus unintelligent," "honest versus dishonest," and so on. The self is not just one construct among innumerable others we employ in our understanding; it is one of the "core" constructs, a stable and deeply entrenched one rather than a peripheral one, open to quick and repeated revision. Says Kelly (1955): "*Core constructs are those which govern a person's maintenance processes*—that is, *those by which he maintains his identity and existence*" (p. 482; italics original). What this implies is that the self and other such core constructs *define* who one is; indeed, they *are* the person. Kelly (1955, p. 482) notes that in healthy persons, the core constructs are comprehensive, i.e., applicable to a wide variety of known events relevant to them, but not too "permeable," i.e., not too loose, inconsistent, tenuous, or excessively encompassing (p. 80). As a result, healthy persons can see themselves as complex and organized persons, and can precisely evaluate new events without overestimating their significance, as hypochondriacal or paranoid persons often do. Indeed, Kelly (1955) views mental health as a matter of correct or valid construal of events; a psychological disorder is defined as "a personal construction which is used repeatedly in spite of consistent invalidation" (p. 831). A simple example is that of a paranoid who holds to the belief that everyone is trying to get him in trouble, despite repeated evidence to the contrary.

This view of psychological disorder leads to the characterization of psychotherapy as an "aid to reconstruction" (Kelly, 1955, p. 937). Kelly fashions the task of reconstruction on the "... modern science model. Constructs are hypotheses. Prediction is the goal" (p. 940). In the day-to-day life of ordinary persons, as in science, the world is always open to alternative constructions, so one always should be on the lookout for better, more functional constructions that allow us to more accurately predict the events around us. Insofar as the patient's difficulties are most likely to stem from erroneous constructions, the therapist asks the patient first to take stock of how he or she sees things in relation to the world, to carefully examine the current constructions, then to think of alternative hypotheses and try them out in real life for a while, even as a scientist experimentally tests new hypotheses. To that end, specific methods are developed. For instance, the client is asked to write a "self-characterization," a descriptive account of how a friend might describe him. If he most commonly describes persons including himself in terms of the "kindly versus hostile" dimension, the therapist asks him to move back and forth on the continuum between the two poles. This kind of movement between poles may help the client realize perhaps that he is "kind" while things are going well and tends to become "hostile" when they are not. Such *contrast construction* often helps the client clarify to himself the way he sees himself and

himself and others and bring about greater internal consistency in his construct system (Kelly, 1955, pp. 938–939). The therapist then starts to introduce new elements in the construction system, suggesting alternative dimensions to construe the events of the client's concern, for instance. In a special technique called fixed-role therapy, a script for an alternate way of playing his role as employee or family member is prepared in consultation with the client and one or two collaborating therapists, and the client is encouraged to try this reconstructed way of construing and acting (Kelly, 1955, Ch. 8; Rychlak, 1981, pp. 739–741).

The theoretical underpinnings of Kelly's approach should now be clear. Briefly, Kelly sees the self as a matter of cognitive construction, both as a core construct that shapes the way in which events are assessed and a datum assessed in the light of existing constructs. In other words, the self is both knower and known, interpreter and interpreted. Both as datum and interpretive framework, the self is always considered open to reconstruction. In the later part of this chapter, I shall try to use the Kellyian model of theory and psychotherapy in interpreting Advaita Vedāntic theory and method for self-realization. At this point, let us turn to a brief account of selected contemporary perspectives on the self that focus on cognitive concepts such as schema.

Conceiving of the Future Selves: Hazel Markus's Approach

In a series of publications, Hazel Markus and her associates (Markus, 1977, 1983; Markus & Nurius, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987) have conceptualized the self as a cognitive schema, and have tried to account for its role in conceiving of the future states as well as in directing ongoing behavior. Markus's conceptualization of cognitive schema follows the pioneering work by Frederic Bartlett (1932), and the seminal contributions of Piaget (1951) and Kelly (1955). Markus (1977) defines self-schemata as "cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information" (p. 64). In her initial studies, Markus (1977) experimentally demonstrated that self-schemata facilitate the processing of information about the self, give confidence in predicting their own future behaviors, and resist counterschematic information. In the light of her own and other empirical studies, she tried to show how self-schemata shape the perceiver's expectations, determine the way in which a situation is framed or interpreted, and selectively influence attention (Markus, 1983). An important aspect of her work is concerned with the potential or possible selves, i.e., conceptions of the self in future states (Markus & Nurius, 1987). The future selves may be positive states hoped for, such as a rich and famous self that is esteemed and revered by others, or a feared self: sick, unemployed, penniless, and unloved. The construction of future selves is thus inextricably associated with affective states like hope and fear, and accordingly guides one's course of action so as to avoid undesirable future states and to attain the desirable ones. The connec-

tion pointed out by Markus between the cognitive construction of the self on the one hand and the emotion and action on the other is important in the study of the self. We shall discuss the nature of this connection wherever relevant in the following chapters.

For decades, "self-concept" was conceptualized in psychology as if it were a static, measurable entity of which a single aspect, namely self-esteem, could predict global aspects of behavior such as delinquency, academic achievement, or marital adjustment. In their survey of the more recent trends in research, Markus and Wurf (1987, p. 300) note that the tendency now is to view self-concept as a "dynamic interpretive structure" that mediates a variety of intrapersonal processes (such as information processing, affect, and motivation) as well as interpersonal processes (such as perception of and responses to other people). Also, self-concept is considered to be a multifaceted phenomenon including images, cognitive schemata, and prototypes with which to compare new stimuli, as well as an ensemble of theories, goals, and tasks. According to Markus, what operates within the individual at a given time is a "working self" concept—a particular configuration of representations drawn from the self-concept that regulates ongoing action. At any given time, particular aspects of the overall self-concept that are relevant to the situation on hand (self-as-parent and one's parenting skills in dealing with one's child, for instance) might be drawn into action so as to influence information processing and control of action relevant to the situation.

Thus conceived, the working self implies a system of switching from one Jamesian self (or role) to another appropriate one as demanded by the changing situation. To help understand what is involved here, visualize a homemaker switching several times among a repertoire of selves—mother, wife, cook, consumer, neighbor, grandmother—in a short period depending on who calls for attention at the moment. The concept of a working self suggests the fully dynamic nature of the self; it implies an ensemble of cognitive structures and processes in continual action, an ensemble that not only monitors the changing events in the world around, but also is self-correctively "in the making," as with all Piagetian schemata.

From the foregoing account it should be clear that Markus's "dynamic self-concept" is both a structure and process, stable and yet malleable. It illustrates the contemporary trend to avoid the tendency typical of the mid-20th-century psychology to conceptualize the self as either structure or process, either stable or malleable. It also illustrates a tendency to avoid the compartmentalization of psychological processes into cognition, emotion, and action, but rather to emphasize their interconnectedness. Markus's concept of "future selves," for instance, implies not simply a cold, rational anticipation of future possibilities, but also the experiencing of the fear or hope they engender. Such emotions in turn imply that one is prompted to set appropriate goals and initiate action so as to help allay fears

or to realize positive outcomes. This latter idea suggests the agentic nature of the self, which will be discussed in a separate chapter.

The Totalitarian Ego: A. G. Greenwald's Contributions

In an article published in 1980, Anthony G. Greenwald argued that the ego is an organization of knowledge characterized by totalitarian strategies of information control. He refers to the earlier publications of Seymour Epstein (1973) and Jane Loevinger (1976) that explain how and why the ego can be viewed as an organization of knowledge. Following Loevinger, Greenwald conceives of and compares the organization of knowledge at three different levels: belief systems of individual persons, political ideologies shared by party members, and scientific theories shared by communities of scholars. He suggests that the organization of knowledge at all three levels manifest the following common features: a conservative tendency (i.e., a tendency to sustain or protect the presently held beliefs) and a tendency to ignore or reject information contrary to current beliefs. In support of this thesis, Greenwald refers to the work of George Orwell (1949) and Hanna Arendt (1966) on the nature of totalitarian ideologies, and of Thomas Kuhn (1970) on the nature of scientific theories, and marshals data from numerous studies by experimental and cognitive psychologists on information processing. In addition, Greenwald presents several poignant illustrations from day-to-day life showing how people often accept only what fits their presently held beliefs, ignore or dismiss contrary evidence, and even fabricate stories to rationalize even the most ludicrous views of themselves or of events around them. Since Greenwald has presented a persuasive set of arguments based on review of a considerable amount of evidence from numerous published studies, I shall leave it to the interested reader to decide whether Greenwald's conclusions are reasonable. Here, I would simply abstract some of his key observations regarding the nature of the ego as an illustration of a prominent contemporary perspective, and examine its theoretical and practical implications that would be relevant for a cross-cultural comparison of perspectives.

According to Greenwald, the ego's cognitive functioning manifests the following three types of biases: egocentricity (the self as focus of knowledge), "beneffectance" (a neologism for the tendency toward the perception of responsibility for desired, but not undesired, outcomes), and cognitive conservatism (resistance to cognitive change). Egocentricity implies the common tendency to remember the past "as if it were a drama in which the self was the leading player" (Greenwald, 1980, p. 604). One need not go very far for an illustration; I need only to recall how, when my colleague asked me about the office meeting that he had missed the other day, I gave an account primarily of what *I* said in it and of *my* opinions of what others said. Another aspect of egocentricity is to view the self as

"the axis of cause and effect," such that one tends to have an illusion of control over events that depend only on chance, as in choosing a lottery ticket, for instance. On the other hand, one also tends to view the self as the intended target of other people's action, a tendency common in paranoia. "Beneffectance" is the tendency to see oneself as cause of only the desirable events, such as success in an examination, and to pass the blame for failure to external factors, such as a poor teacher, or bad luck. Cialdini and his associates (1976) have coined the term "basking in reflected glory" (BIRGing) to designate the common tendency to identify with winners so as to share their glory, only to disown them in case they lose. For example, in their study it was noted that college students often said "*we* won" whenever the college team won a game, but switched to "*they* lost" when it was defeated. Group pride and ethnocentrism are often a form of BIRGing; even scholars sometimes secretly wish to indicate that they are great because their ancestors were highly accomplished, wise, or the first ones in the world to come up with a significant idea, and so on.

Cognitive conservatism is a pervasive bias. As noted, it is common to the organization of knowledge at different levels: at the level of personal worldviews, in widely shared religious or political ideologies, as well as in scientific paradigms. Conservatism implies resistance to change or to revise currently held ideas in the light of contrary evidence. To put it in Piagetian terms, this implies an excess of assimilation over accommodation. Greenwald notes that, at the individual level, cognitive conservatism manifests in many forms: in a tendency to ignore or reject persuasive messages counter to the then-favored opinions; to reconstruct or "re-write" memories so as to justify current feelings and attitudes (Bartlett, 1932, pp. 206–207); to seek out information and the company of people who would support the current beliefs; or to believe that the present is better than the past, and that the future will be better still, and so on.

A few years after the publication of Greenwald's paper on the totalitarian ego, Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) published a historical overview of psychological perspectives on the self. Some aspects of their review are pertinent to our discussion, and will be briefly noted here. One that pertains to the self-as-knower is the idea that the self is an existing cognitive structure or a "prototype." On the basis of the work of T. B. Rogers (1981) and other researchers, Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) suggest that "the self concept functions as a cognitive prototype—a category or central tendency with which novel stimuli can be compared" (p. 149). Without going into the details of experimental evidence that is cited in support of this view, some of its implications for selfhood may be examined. To put it in broader and more general terms than those suggested by Greenwald and Pratkanis, the existing cognitive structures constitute the self-as-knower. These include the entire range of cognitive schemata that operate within an individual at a given time, as well as one's explicitly or implicitly held beliefs, values, principles, guidelines, and so on that define one's position on relevant issues and guide one's behavior

in daily life. All these are products of one's prior history and cognitive development. The current beliefs and values may have replaced different and even opposite ones held before, and may well be open to revision in the future. But as present or existing cognitive structures, they are the truths to the best of one's knowledge, and they are *the* standards by which the world must be judged and the course of action decided. One may not be explicitly and consciously aware of all the existing cognitive structures, nor have the ability to use them in a cool, affectively neutral, and "rational" manner. Nevertheless, the *I*, as a knower, *is* the means of knowing (such as existing cognitive structures and functions) available to oneself at the moment.

Another aspect of Greenwald and Pratkanis's overview of the self-concept is their discussion of the traditional knower–known distinction in contemporary idiom. Putting it in the language of artificial intelligence, they view the distinction between self-as-knower and self-as-known as analogous to the distinction between "procedural" and "declarative" knowledge. These, in turn, are analogous to cognitive process versus product or content, respectively. In terms of computer metaphor, subject and object are viewed as program and data aspects of the computer, respectively (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984, p. 142). Greenwald and Pratkanis quote Ulric Neisser (1976), who also uses the computer metaphor to describe a cognitive schema. Says Neisser (1976):

> a schema is like a *format* in a computer-programming language. Formats specify that the information must be of a certain sort if it is to be interpreted coherently. Other information will be ignored or will lead to meaningless results.... A schema is not merely like a format; it also functions as a plan ... The schema is not only the plan but also the executor of the plan. (pp. 55–56)

The similarity between such conceptualization and Markus's self as both structure and process should be obvious. What this implies is that the self-as-knower, viewed as "executor" of a plan or as process, cannot be static, but is active and therefore a continually changing phenomenon, although it generally tends to be "conservative" or resistant to change in its structure or form.

Greenwald and Pratkanis point out some theoretical implications that follow from such new metaphors. They point out that both program and data are represented as bits in random access memory, and that the distinction between program and data is not a sharp one. "[T]he fuzziness of the program versus data distinction captures an essential aspect of the distinction between self as knower and self as object of knowledge" (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984, p. 142). In addition to this theoretical difficulty in making a sharp distinction between the self as knower and known, Greenwald and Pratkanis note a methodological difficulty in studying them. It is concerned with the "introspective access," in that "we have access to the *products* of cognitive process, but not to the *workings* of the cognitive process" (p. 142, emphasis added). This difficulty can be easily and quickly noted by anybody in an attempt to specify what exactly went through one's mind just

moments ago. It arises partly from the rapidity with which cognitive processes arise in and vanish from the stream of consciousness, and has been discussed by William James, among others.

In his inimitable style, James uses distinctive metaphors to describe the "baleful" difficulty in watching one's own thought processes: "The attempt at introspective analysis is in fact like seizing a spinning top to catch its motion, or trying to turn up the gas quickly enough to see how the darkness looks" (James, 1890/1983, p. 237). The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (6.34) describes the same difficulty with a different metaphor: The mind is so fickle, says Arjuna, trying to curb it is like holding the wind. James (1890/1983) quotes Auguste Comte, who had pointed out another important difficulty in knowing the knower: "The thinker cannot divide himself into two, of whom one reasons while the other observes him reason. The organ observed and the organ observing being, in this case, identical, how could observation take place?" (p. 188). Yājñavalkya, the ancient Upaniṣadic sage, noted pretty much the same dilemma when he said "Whereby would one understand him by whom one understands this All? Lo, whereby would one understand the understander?" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 2.14.14). Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984, p. 144) note the same dilemma regarding the subject–object duality, but express it differently with the help of the metaphor of mirrors in a barber shop suggested by Ernest Hilgard. If we try to identify which image is seeing and which is seen, says Hilgard (1949), "it soon gets all confused as to the self that is doing the looking and the self which is being look at" (p. 377).

While commenting on Hilgard's observations Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) blame the mirror metaphor for adding confusion to the enigma of subject–object duality. They then refer to other metaphors such as "the DNA molecule that contains instructions for its own replication and Gödel's theorem that asserts its own unprovability," (pp. 143–144) suggested by Douglas Hofstadter (1979). Although Greenwald and Pratkanis find these metaphors to be "more substantial and more stimulating" than the mirror metaphor, they conclude that such metaphors "leave the experienced duality of the self a mystery, and thereby encourage the suspicion that the self as subject/knower is beyond the domain of scientific treatment" (p. 144). Their use of the metaphor of the computer program, they hope, will bring the self-as-knower within the domain of empirical psychology. Be that as it may, the selected aspects of the views of Greenwald and Pratkanis noted in this section have interesting parallels as well as opposites in Indian thought that need to be pointed out.

In regard to the "egocentrism" and "beneffectance" of the ego, some parallel notions from the *Bhagavad-Gītā* may be noted. According to the *Gītā* (18.13–14) there are five factors that account for the accomplishment of all actions: the context of action, the agent, the instruments of various sorts, various kinds of effort, and finally, chance or fate (*daiva*). Of these, the agent egotistically considers him- or herself as the sole cause of action, neglecting the contributing factors. Such egotism, according to the *Gītā* (3.27), is a sign of the lack of understanding. To put it in contemporary idiom, this is a common "attribution error," which Greenwald accounts for in terms of the ego's "beneffectance." Despite this parallel between the Advaita Vedāntic and Greenwaldian views of the ego, however, the two are different in a most significant way. Greenwald's analysis, like that of most contemporary psychologists, is impersonal and theoretical, while the typical Advaita Vedāntic approach would be to carry forward its theoretical analysis to the personal and practical realm. Let me speculate on how someone involved in a Advaita Vedāntic variety of personal self-examination might view egocentrism and cognitive conservatism noted by Greenwald:

> If Greenwald's observations about egocentrism and cognitive conservatism are accurate and widely applicable, am I immune to such foibles? I must recognize that I often find myself clinging on very dearly to my current beliefs and opinions, and tend to ignore or disregard evidence to the contrary. Greenwald is right when he says that one often tends "to believe that the present is better than the past, and that the future will be better still." I *do* very often think that what I know now is better than what I knew before. By the same token, I must grant that my future ways of knowing will be better still. But when I say that, am I not forgetting that what I know now is only a relative and provisional truth at best? Have I not often found myself to be dead wrong on important issues in the past, and have subsequently converted myself to the opposite side? And yet I continue to think, so very often, that I am right and those opposed to me must be wrong. Isn't that a sign of what Greenwald has called a "totalitarian ego?" What are the lessons that I must learn from this?

This sort of personal self-examination is deeply shunned in an intellectual atmosphere shaped in the impersonal and purist tradition of Greek *theoria*. We may recall Husserl's exaltation of this purist tradition and the denigration of Indian thought for its practical and moral concerns. It is not of course the practical use of psychology or any other science that is the question, for that is not only permitted but exalted. But in the Western cultural milieu, practical application of knowledge is rarely advocated in a personal way as it has been in Yoga, Advaita Vedānta, and other such systems of the Indian tradition. We may recall here Piaget's emphasis on a decentered, impersonal epistemic subject, and Turner's criticism about Piaget's lack of inclination to "recenter" the knower in the banal human and personal context. Turner's criticism of Piaget reflects a tension between personal and impersonal stances that is rarely expressed in Western psychology.

Harré's Social Constructionist View of the Self

In *Personal Being*, Rom Harré (1983) has proposed a *social constructionist* view of the self and identity that is significantly different from any of those

considered above. Several crucial aspects of his perspective may be noted: (1) being a philosopher rather than a psychologist, Harré focuses more on theory than on empirical research; (2) he rejects the notion of humans as the high-grade automata often implicit in cognitive science and in North American social psychology, and considers them to be agents responsible for their own actions; and (3) Harré considers persons as cultural artifacts rather than natural objects, and follows G. H. Mead and Lev Vygotsky in assuming that individual minds are "structured and stocked from a social and interpersonal reality" (p. 8). Like Mead, Harré suggests that selves originate from conversation with others, and following Wittgenstein, he tries to show how the self is structured by the "language games" in which the individual participates.

According to Harré (1983), "[t]o be psychologically an individual is to be self-conscious and self-activating and controlling. The former includes a knowledge of one's history as well as one's unique location in the array of persons" (p. 23). In Harré's view, "person" is "the socially defined, publicly visible embodied being, endowed with all kinds of powers and capacities for public, meaningful action." The "self [is] the personal unity I take myself to be, my singular inner being, so to speak. The self, in this sense, is that for which Hume searched, but which he could not find" (1983, p. 26). Thus, unity and singularity are fundamental properties of selfhood *by definition*. Moreover, Harré speaks of selfhood as a "unity of unities" (1983, p. 29), and considers it at three related but distinct levels: (1) a *formal* unity in terms of the "centered" nature of consciousness; (2) a *practical* unity of the self as agency, or locus of action in an array of persons; and (3) an *empirical* unity, suggestive of a single "point of view" moving along a spatiotemporally continuous path, as it were, so that experiences of a lifetime can be organized as the narrative of a "truly one and only one distinct individual" (1983, p. 205).

For Harré (1983, p. 193), unity of self is a theoretical concept and not an empirical discovery. He believes that selves are constructed (1983, p. 27), and that unities of selfhood are artifacts (p. 22). In accepting that selves are not empirically observable entities, Harré agrees with Hume. He also endorses Kant's view that "unities of experience are accounted for through application of the doctrine of synthesis." Harré explicitly states that "[i]n the Kantian view, the experienced unities of personal being are actively created out of an undifferentiated continuum of experience. I believe Kant's solution to be essentially right" (1983, p. 15).

Although Harré considers his project to be Kantian in view of his agreement of the point just mentioned, he sharply differs from Kant in some important ways: "Contrary to Kant, who held that transcendental objects had only transcendental properties, I hold that at least some important transcendental objects have social properties" (1983, p. 22). Harré's emphasis on society stands in contrast with the "individualist psychologies," such as Freudian psychoanalysis, Piagetian cognitivism, and Daniel Dennett's (1978) "cognitive science." He faults individualist

psychologies for at least the following problems, among several others: (1) their difficulty in explaining how intersubjectivity and knowledge of other minds are possible (1983, p. 8), and (2) their failure in explaining personhood as a psychological unity (p. 10). Like G. H. Mead, Harré considers the symbiotic interactions among a collectivity of human beings as a fundamental reality, and locates the origin of mind in human conversation. He recognizes that for collectivists like Mead and Vygotsky, "the deepest problem is how individuality is created and sustained in so thoroughly social a world" (1983, p. 8). Solving this problem is precisely the challenge Harré (1983) undertakes in *Personal Being*.

The basic premise of Harré's social constructionist approach is that "cognitive activities are primarily public and collective, located in talk. They become personal activities of individual people by developmental processes of the kind ... by which we come to learn to talk to ourselves" (1983, p. 21). "Our mental life," Harré argues, "is the result of the acquisition of a theory" (p. 21). During the process of socialization, or "educational process," as Harré calls it, we acquire the theoretical concept "self." The concept "self" arises in the same way that concepts arise in natural sciences: "to describe processes and entities which are held responsible for patterns found in observation and experiment, but which are beyond existing observational techniques" (Harré, 1987, p. 47). Harré gives the examples of the familiar concepts and theories: the concept of molecule, which arose as an analogy of a "Newtonian material thing," and the theory of natural selection, which emerged as a parallel of domestic selection. Natural selection is not an observable phenomenon, but is inferred from observing the practices of animal breeding, even as the unobservable force of gravity is postulated from the observable behavior of physical bodies. Thus, in the "language game" of biology, new species come about through differential encouragement of natural variations by natural selection, in a way parallel to the new breeds created in livestock by differentially encouraging domestic variations by domestic selection. Similarly, unobservable selves are inferred as analogues of commonly observed persons. In the language games common to many societies, the concept of "selves" arises by following the same rules of grammar that people use in talking about persons. In other words, we learn to talk about "I" and "me" the same way that we learn to talk about "he," "she," "him," or "her."

Viewed from Harré's sociolinguistic approach, the "I" is a first-person pronoun that serves an indexical function to help locate the speaker in an array of persons even as the terms "here" and "now" designate the location and point in time for persons who share and understand the spatiotemporal and social context of conversation. The consistent usage of the terms "I" and "self" therefore seems compatible with a spatiotemporally continuous entity to which psychological states, rights and duties, and praise and blame can be ascribed (Harré, 1987, p. 48). Aside from serving an indexical function, consistent use of the first-person pronoun helps provide a systematic organization to an individual's experience. Since

such organization is a product of language games, it is likely to differ from one linguistic community to another. However, in Harré's view, the language games typical of most European languages help organize all experience around the "I" as the center.

The "centered" structure described by Harré (1983) does not imply "egocentricity" in the Piagetian sense; its main feature is a "point" or pencil organization (p. 144) that has a "center" from which radial arrows emanate in the direction of uncountable intentional objects, so to speak. Harré schematically represents this notion of structure in Fig. 4.1. The fact that the arrows in Harré's scheme reach out to "intentional" objects is very important, because it emphasizes the *directed* nature of consciousness (discussed briefly earlier in Chapter 2). However, intentionality conceived in this fashion is purely an artifact of language; it does not imply a "seer" located at the center. There is no ontological or existential significance to the "I" as conceived by Harré. Indeed, the circle representing the structure of experience in Harré's theory is "empty." According to Harré (1987):

> The structure [as represented in Fig. 4.1] can exist whether or not there is any being at the "centre" to which the concept of "self" refers ... [T]he embedded "I" can be a common subject of predication in just the way a theoretical term in physics can. In this way the "self" is very much like the concept of "gravity," which serves to organize our experience with respect to structured and centered fields, while we can remain quite agnostic as to whether there is anything substantial occupying the "centres of gravity" ... (p. 49–50)

Thus, linguistic practices involving first-person pronouns are effective in creating an impression that all experiences of a person center around a common "point" of view and a point of action.

As to identity, Harré (1983) distinguishes between the two senses or meanings of "sameness" implied in the notion of identity: (1) the sameness of a property or quality in numerically distinct and different entities, and (2) the numerical identity implied in saying "this is the same person" (p. 204), and he tries to account for both. Harré (1983) also distinguishes clearly and sharply between the *sense* of identity ("how people experience their unique selfhood"), on the one

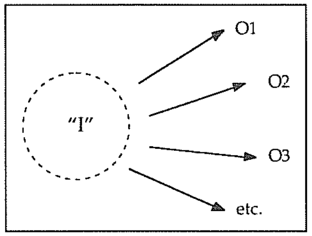

FIGURE 4.1. Harré's view of the "pencil" organization of the mind. Reproduced from Harré (1987), with permission.

hand, and the *fact* of personal identity ("what it is that makes a human being this or that particular person within a public–collective context," p. 203), on the other. He considers the fact of identity as well established, since not only humans but even chimpanzees seem to have no difficulty in treating each other differently. For Harré, it seems equally obvious that most people have a strong sense of their personal identity. "What ... are the origins of this strong sense of identity?" asks Harré. "I propose to show," he answers, "that the best *hypothesis* is that though the sense of identity is conceptually and logically distinct from the *fact* of personal identity, nevertheless the former, in the course of human development, derives from the latter" (1983, p. 210; emphasis added). A couple of pages later in the same text, he adds that "a human being does *not* learn that he or she is a person by the empirical disclosure of *an experiential fact*. Personal identity is symbolic of social practices, not of empirical experiences. It has the status of a *theory*" (Harré, 1983, p. 212; emphasis added).

It is rather strange that, as clearly indicated by the above quotations, Harré sometimes considers personal identity to be a matter of fact and sometimes a theory. As to the empirical foundations of the fact of identity, he seems to have some doubts insofar as he says that "[a]dequate empirical studies of this matter have yet to be made" (1983, p. 210). As to the foundations of the theory of personal identity, he stresses the view that sameness of the person is a strong and necessary *presupposition*, and provides various arguments to support the view. First, Harré (1983, p. 210) approvingly refers to Joseph Butler's (1735/1975, in response to Locke) argument that memories *presuppose* identity of a person. Second, he argues that (1983, p. 209) it is nonsensical to think that, in trying to answer the question "Who am I?" I could one day discover that I was someone else. For, he says, questioning one's personal identity "undermines one of the very *presuppositions* that are required for first person utterances to make sense" (pp. 209–210, emphasis added). Harré's constant vacillation between identity as fact versus theory, or discovery versus presupposition, reveals a major weakness in his solution to the problem of identity.

Certain other difficulties in Harré's views follow from his *social* constructionist view of the self. He suggests, for instance, that a socially constructed self cannot be individually altered. According to Harré (1983), it is "... virtually impossible for [Western] people to acquire the genuinely Oriental selves they need to be adepts of Eastern religions" (p. 26). While I can appreciate the difficulty in adopting Yogic or Advaita Vedāntic practices while living in a North American society, the "virtual *impossibility*" of doing so seems exaggerated to me. Harré is apparently not unaware of the popularity in the West of "Eastern" practices designed to radically modify selfhood. Thus, while reviewing the literature on altered states of consciousness, he mentions that "[a]depts of 'altered states' techniques talk of 'dissolving the self' or sometimes 'decentering experience' " (1983, p. 165). He concludes from his review of the literature that "[t]he 'dissolu-

tion of self' is a temporary cognitive incapacity, not at all to be confused with the selflessness of one who puts the interests or welfare of others before in his or her own. Just this confusion is much in evidence in fringe psychology" (1983, p. 165). I am not sure whether this alleged confusion is the problem of the "fringe" psychologists, who are targets of Harré's scorn,[6] or Harré's own. Granted that it is not very easy for Asians to *assimilate* in Western cultures, or for Westerners to successfully practice Eastern technologies of the self, but these are not impossible tasks as Harré's would have us believe. Those who witness the East–West cultural exchange from close quarters could easily encounter concrete instances of success in bridging the hemispheric cultural gap, but those who assign such exchange to the "fringe" may be either unwilling or unable to encounter and recognize such instances.

Overview of Contemporary Perspectives on Self-as-Knower

The small number of studies examined above cannot be claimed to be representative of the entire range of contemporary perspectives on the relationship between cognition and the self. Nevertheless, they do give a flavor of some of the prominent trends of current thought. To help provide an overview of these trends, the following questions may be asked: How is the self-as-knower conceptualized in cognitive psychological terms? How can it be studied? Does the self-as-knower account for identity, i.e., unity and sameness of selfhood? Whatever its nature, what can we *do* with it?

Greenwald and Pratkanis are among the very few psychologists today who have explicitly addressed the question of the self-as-knower at a metatheoretical level. They view the self-as-knower in terms of (1) existing cognitive structures that direct the individual's information processing, and (2) the ongoing cognitive processes. This makes sense insofar as my current cognitive schema are the means I have at my disposal in getting to know the world. They are the glasses through which I see the world. My current assumptions and beliefs serve as prototypes with which I compare new ideas in assessing their truth value. As Piaget's work shows, my cognitive processes (concrete or formal operations and the like) keep evolving, so that my ways of using the existing cognitive structures also change from time to time.

Cognitive structures are not open to direct observation. However, as Piaget and other cognitive psychologists have shown, their existence can be confidently inferred, and their features can be reliably described, on the basis of fairly simple observations of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Most such methods are devised for the experimenters to study cognitive structures and processes in others, rather than themselves. Greenwald and Pratkanis have rightly noted that the ongoing cognitive processes are not easily observable either. This is an old observation. The rapidity of the thinking processes poses a major difficulty in studying the self-as-knower in action. William James noted this difficulty at the dawn of modern psychology. In the early part of this century, the introspectionists of Würzburg tried to train subjects in watching their own thought processes while solving simple problems in arithmetic or logical reasoning. However, the controversies surrounding their findings and methods led J. B. Watson to conclude that introspectionist methods were incurably unreliable. Despite the revival of interest in introspective studies of consciousness in recent years (Pope & Singer, 1978), cognitive processes are generally recognized by most contemporary psychologists as directly unobservable.

This is an issue where the traditional Indian perspective is quite different. Ancient yogis devised a different way of coping with the problem of the rapidity of thought processes: try to slow down and attenuate thought processes. Husserl tried to do something similar in early decades of the 20th century. I have compared the yogic and Husserlian approaches elsewhere (Paranjpe & Hanson, 1988), and it is not necessary to repeat that discussion here. However, Husserl himself abandoned his meditative phenomenology in favor of interpretive phenomenology. The persistent lack of interest in the West in the manipulation of ones's own mental processes, along with a reluctance to accept the evidence of experiential states obtained through successful meditative practices, presents a major problem in East–West dialogue on issues such as the self-as-knower and the transcendental Self beyond it. I shall return to this broader issue in the last chapter of this volume.

As to the sameness of the self-as-knower, contemporary approaches are clear and unequivocal. If we follow Greenwald and Pratkanis in considering existing cognitive structures that direct information processing to be the self-as-knower, it must be open to continual change. First, as Piagetian studies show, the cognitive structures and processes evolve according to a pattern of growth guided by a biological timetable for maturation. Second, as the world around us changes, we must appropriately change ("accommodate") our ways of knowing or else stagnate and be ineffective in dealing with the environment. A changing self-as-knower cannot itself account for selfsameness in a person. Advaita Vedāntists explicitly recognize this, and as we shall see, suggest a transcognitive center of experience as the basis for selfsameness of personhood.

Turning now to the issue of what we can *do* with the self-as-knower, we may note that among the cognitive constructionist perspectives examined earlier in this chapter, Kelly's approach is the most strongly applied in orientation. Kelly is one of the pioneers in developing therapeutic techniques for the reconstruction of not only one's self-image, or self-as-known, but also of the cognitive constructs involved in appraising all kinds of objects, implying the self-as-knower. In a broad sense, the self-as-knower is open to modification through a variety of means—such as education, therapy, or even propaganda—designed to bring about changes in our cognitive contents and structures. Applications of Kellyian techniques, like those of most other Western models, aim at the restoration of normality among

persons who see themselves to be deficient in coping with problems in life or those who are medically diagnosed as "patients" in need of therapy. Such applications are clearly much needed in every society in the East as well as the West. The approach called the "path of knowledge" (*jñāna mārga*) that developed in India is also a "therapeutic" device, except that it is aimed not at the removal of pathologies or deficiencies, but at a radical removal of suffering and the attainment of extraordinary levels of inner contentment and bliss. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall discuss the Advaita Vedāntic search for a transcendental, transcognitive basis for identity in the language and metaphor of constructivist cognitive psychology and psychotherapy.

The Self Beyond Cognition: Cognitive Deconstruction of the Ego in Advaita Vedāntic Meditation

As noted in Chapter 3, it is the embodied person (*jīva*) that is the knower, agent, and enjoyer/sufferer in Advaita Vendānta. Radhakrishnan (1948/1973) explains that, according to Śaṅkara, a person's understanding of oneself as a knower–agent–enjoyer is "constructed out of ignorance" (*avidyākalpita*) (p. 355).[7] In Advaita Vedānta, the self-as-knower is both constructor and constructed. In the process or construction, there is misattribution of permanence and selfsameness of the Self onto the ego, and at the same time, sickness, tiredness, and other such transitory qualities of the body are mistakenly attributed to the unchanging Self. Advaita Vedānta suggests a method of critical self-examination for the removal of this error of double misattribution (*adhyāsa*). The successful practice of this method is said to lead to the direct experience of the Self in its natural state of Being. In my view, the Advaita Vedāntic method of meditation is interpretable in the contemporary idiom as a form of cognitive "deconstruction" of the ego. To help deepen the understanding of the Advaita Vedāntic views of self and identity, it is necessary to first clarify some of its basic concepts and related issues in the language and idiom of contemporary psychology.

The Advaita Vedāntic View of Cognition, Knowledge, and the Knower

The Sanskrit term *jñāna* is usually translated as *knowledge* in English, but this is not quite accurate; also, there is no exact Sanskrit equivalent of the term *cognition*, as it is used in psychology today. Unlike the term *knowledge*, which generally implies veridical cognition, *jñāna* does not always imply veridicality. As noted by D. M. Datta (1932/1972, p. 19), the word *jñāna* stands for all kinds of cognition, irrespective of whether it is true (*yathārtha*) or false (*mithyā*). The Sanskrit term *pramā* means valid cognition, and *pramātṛ* means the "knower"

who tries to obtain valid cognition. *Pramāṇa* is the source that "causes" (i.e., brings about) knowledge, or validates the cognition. While in the Western tradition perception and inference, or experience and reason, are widely recognized as the two sources of knowledge, in India six sources are commonly recognized. They are, as noted in the previous chapter, direct perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, nonperception, and postulation. We need not discuss the nature and epistemological significance of all the six sources here. We need to focus mainly on direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and postulation, since these are more relevant for our purpose than others.

Most schools of Indian thought consider knowledge (*jñāna*) to be a kind of relationship between the knower (*jñātṛ*, *pramātṛ*) and the known (*jñeya*, *prameya*). The Advaita Vedānta also considers such tripartite division (*tripuṭī*) as central to their conceptual analysis. However, unlike some other systems, the Advaitists hold that each component is but a differentiated aspect of the same ubiquitous Brahman. While in the fourth state of consciousness, the Brahman is experienced in its undifferentiated form, in the wakeful state its all-pervasive "conscious stuff" (*caitanya*) manifests differentially as the knower (*parmātṛ*), knowledge (*pramā*), and the object of knowledge (*prameya*). It is only an individuated and embodied consciousness that can be a knower, not the undifferentiated pure consciousness. Although Brahman is sometimes considered to be the Truth (*satyam*) or Knowledge Incarnate (*jñānam*), such expression implies knowledge in the "higher" form (*parā vidyā*), not in the ordinary or empirical form (*aparā vidyā*). While the higher knowledge is transcognitive and nonsensory, the ordinary or empirical knowledge must depend on the various sensory and cognitive processes of a living body functioning in an attentive mode.

Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) lists a set of conditions without which a knower cannot function: (1) the senses based in a body, (2) an ego that is identified with the body and is in possession and control of the sensory functions, and (3) the ego's attention to, and involvement in, what is going on around itself. For knowledge to be possible at all, all these enabling conditions, or "adjuncts" (*upādhi*), are essential. All these adjuncts belong to the material (*jaḍa*) world; by their very nature they are impermanent and lack the luminosity or illuminating character of consciousness. As such, the ego, as knower, must borrow the illuminating power from the Ātman, which is unchanging (*nitya*), conscious (*caitanyamaya*), and self-illuminating (*svayaṁ prakāśa*). Despite its self-illuminating character, the Ātman cannot itself be a knower of objects in the world. This is because being uninvolved (*asaṅga*) and passive (*akartṛ*), the Ātman cannot "reach out to the world," so to speak, and use the various psychophysical means such as the senses and the intellect needed to obtain knowledge. A sense of egoism and a degree of identification with the body, senses, mind, intellect, and other adjuncts are indispensable for the possibility of empirical knowledge. Thus, in *Siddhāntabindu*, Madhusūana Sarasvatī insists that the empirical knower (*pramātṛ*) is the ego that acts, enjoys, and suffers,

not the unattached and unchanging Ātman[8] (see Abhyankar, 1928/1962, p. 19). Advaita Vedānta clearly accepts an epistemic dualism. Knowledge at the lower, practical, day-to-day level is viewed as the territory of the embodied ego involved with events in the surrounding world, while the higher form of knowledge is said to be experienced by the unattached, transcendental Ātman.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, the sense of "I" simultaneously manifests the diametrically opposed properties of the transcendental Ātman on the one hand and of the empirical ego enmeshed in the world on the other. While the "I" derives the sense of permanence and illuminating character of consciousness from the Self (*Ātman*), it also manifests the continually changing features of the body as well as its cognitive capacities, structures, contents, and processes. Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) points out that in our sense of "I" there is a mutual superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the characteristics of the Ātman–Brahman and the ego onto each other. Thus, the Self, although unchanging and blissful in nature, *appears* to be sometimes happy and sometimes sad, dejected, frustrated, or whatever the ego interprets itself to feel in the continually changing circumstances. On the other hand, the many changing selves appear to be one and the same "I" because of misattribution to them of permanence and undivided character of the Self, i.e., Ātman–Brahman. In either case, something appears to be what it is *not* (see Mahadevan, 1985).

Advaita Vedāntists use the term *adhyāsa*, meaning superimposition, to designate the *misattribution* of the properties of the single, unchanging Self onto the many changing selves. This constitutes the "fundamental attributional error," to use an expression popular in contemporary social psychology. Superimposition involves an error because of the appearance of one as having the attributes of another. According to Śaṅkara, this error is generalized and pervasive: the multiplicity of forms and objects in the entire universe appear to be different despite being the same as one single undivided Brahman, even as multiple selves appear as one and the same "I". To help understand the superimposition of the properties of the one and the many, Advaita Vedāntists use the metaphor of one and the same sun appearing to be many different suns, as it were, when reflected in countless ripples of water. The sun appears to be many, which it is not, and the ripples appear to be luminous, although they are not. According to Advaita Vedānta, this fundamental attributional error limits human knowledge to such an extent that the whole of humanity is believed to suffer from a "grand illusion" (*māyā*), or nescience (*avidyā*, or "ignorance"). I think that the meaning and implications of the ideas of *māyā* and *avidyā* can best be understood in the light of the "constructionist" implications of Advaita Vedānta.

The Advaita Vedānta and the Constructivist View of Knowledge

Contemporary constructivism and constructionism of Piaget (1954), Berger and Luckmann (1966), Kelly (1955), Goodman (1978), and others offers a relatively new perspective on the nature of knowledge, and I have not yet come across any writings pointing out its parallels in Indian thought. In my view, the Advaita Vedānta has some important constructivist implications that deserve to be discussed here in some detail. The most important in this regard is the fundamental Advaita Vedāntic idea of the constructed (*kalpita*) nature of the phenomenal world. The term *kalpita* is derived from the verb *klṛip*, which is the common root of a set of concepts—*saṁkalpa*, *vikalpa*, *savikalpa*, and *nirvikalpa*—that have a crucial place in Indian thought in general, and in the Advaita Vedānta in particular. In the traditional Sanskrit way of writing, a great deal of attention is paid to the etymology of the words, and technical terms are coined with more critical and meticulous attention to the shades of meaning than is common in English. Against this background, it will be useful to examine what the above-mentioned set of terms means, although such analysis might sound overly punctilious or even inane to those accustomed to the Western styles of scholarship.

The Monier-Williams Dictionary lists the following among the meanings of the verb *klṛip*: to frame, form, invent, compose, arrange, or imagine. By adding the prefix *saṁ* to this root, we get the verb that means "to put together, think about, ponder, wish or determine," while the prefix *vi* obtains "to fashion, contrive or combine, conjecture, or imagine in *various* ways," or "doubt, waver, or hesitate." In general, the prefix *saṁ*, which is the Sanskrit equivalent to the Latin *com* or *co* and Greek *sym*, conveys similarity or togetherness, while *vi* conveys dissimilarity and separateness.[9] As such, the terms *saṁkapa* and *vikalpa* mean "thinking together or in various ways," or "engaging in synthesis and analysis"; they almost exactly convey what contemporary psychology refers to as cognitive "integration" and "differentiation." This would explain why the mind (*manas*) is defined as that which is engaged in *saṁkalpa* and *vikalpa*, i.e., in putting similar things together and telling dissimilar ones apart, and in construing, doubting, deciding, and so on. We see distinct shades here of what may be called in Kantian terms the *synthetic* and *analytic* functions of reason, integration and differentiation in Piagetian terms, or construal of categories as understood in George Kelly's psychology. In Indian philosophy, the terms *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa* have been used to describe two distinct forms of perception. It is common in most schools of Indian thought to describe perception and cognition (*saṁjñāna*) among babies as *nirvikalpa pratyakṣa*, meaning that infants do not have the ability to perceive diversity or distinction, or to construe or imagine. In other words, individuals develop the ability to make meaningful distinctions, construe, and imagine (*savikalpa pratyakṣa*), i.e., the capacity to "reason," as they grow up.[10] In Advaita Vedānta, however, the terms *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* have acquired a special meaning. They are used as adjectives to describe two distinct types of altered states of consciousness (*samādhi*), which are characterized and noncharacterized by the distinction between knower and known, respectively. The overall thrust of Advaita Vedānta is to attain a state of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, which is devoid of the knower–known distinction.

Against the background of the analysis of the terms derived from the verb *klṛip*,

the Advaita Vedāntic approach may be understood in a constructivist terminology as follows: By its very nature the human mind tends to organize experience in terms of similarity and differences in what is perceived, and to construe, think, wish, imagine, doubt, choose, and determine in terms of such organization of experience. Although the perceptual and cognitive functions lack differentiation during infancy, they develop as the individual grows up. With the help of the various cognitive functions, the individual constructs an image of the world around and assigns a place for him- or herself within it. The result is an ego that is wrapped up within a world image of its own making. It is in this sense that, I think, Śaṅkara (1921, Stanza 137) compares the person to a moth wrapped up in its own cocoon. A way out of this trap is to carefully examine the various constructs with which the self is ordinarily identified while keeping in mind that the true Self is unchanging, and that identifying oneself with the variety of continually changing constructs is ultimately erroneous.

The Imperfect Ego as a Knower in a Sea of "Ignorance"

As noted in the previous chapter, Śaṅkara's term *avidyā* is a technical term that suggests the *incompleteness* and imperfection of all empirical knowledge in contrast to the "higher knowledge" claimed to be attainable in the transcognitive fourth state of consciousness. *Avidyā* does not imply the many pejorative connotations of the term *ignorant*, such as illiterate, unlettered, untutored, unlearned, or lacking in intelligence. In Advaita Vedānta, the incompleteness of empirical knowledge is attributed to the imperfections of the enabling conditions or cognitive apparatus of all human beings, including the most gifted.

We may pause here to compare Śaṅkara's view of the incompleteness of empirical knowledge with Piaget's views discussed earlier in this chapter. We may recall that according to Piaget, human knowledge is forever incomplete and revisable because our cognitive structures, which are necessary for knowing anything at any time, are always "in the making" and never perfected. Piaget considers his views about the perpetual revisability of knowledge as consistent with Gödel's theorem of incompleteness. I consider the Piagetian idea of the perpetual revisability of knowledge as consistent with Quine's idea that in science no proposition is immune from revision. Indeed, Piaget repeatedly refers to Gödel's theorem in explaining and justifying his view of knowledge as perpetually evolving. It is my impression that Śaṅkara's view of the incompleteness of all human knowledge is essentially compatible with the views of Gödel, Piaget, and Quine, although each of them formulates his views differently and on differing bases. If in the Piagetian sense scientific progress implies merely going from weaker to stronger systems of knowledge, but never to the state of perfection, then according to Advaita Vedānta, all that the sciences do is to reduce the level of our perpetual "ignorance."

I think it is in this sense that Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) insists that all forms of knowing, along with the various means of validation (*pramāṇa*) used in the various sciences (*śāstrāṇi*), lie within the domain of *avidyā*, or nescience. Yet by no means does he consider the sciences as worthless. The *Īśa* Upaniṣad (#11)[11] clearly recommendsthat one should pursue both, *vidyā* as well as *avidyā*, saying that pursuing just one without the other could lead us to darkness. Although all the sciences are bound to be forever imperfect, we need them to carry ourselves through the mundane world or the practical reality. This is the field in which the self-as-knower, or the ego, must work. It must face the challenges of the changing world with the help of the less-than-perfect means at its disposal to obtain empirical knowledge.

What is the nature of this self-as-knower and how does it acquire empirical knowledge of the surrounding world? The Advaita Vedāntic texts provide a complex model of the same. Let me draw a composite sketch of the Advaita Vedāntic views of this model with the help of S. N. Dasgupta's overview of Śaṅkara's school of Advaita Vedānta. The Advaita Vedānta assigns the tasks of perception, cognition, recollection, and others to an entity conceived as the "inner instrument" (*antaḥkaraṇa*). As noted in the previous chapter, the inner instrument includes the mind (*manas*) manifesting attentivity, the intellect (*buddhi*) meaning the capacity for determination and ascertainment, and *citta*, a storehouse of past impressions and memories. The inner instrument is a crucial aspect of the embodied person that coordinates the functions of the senses and the body while in constant interaction with events within the body and its surroundings. The inner instrument is said to "reach out" to objects in the environment through the senses, and to become transformed into their shapes, so to speak. The inner instrument is constantly undergoing modifications, depending on the objects it reaches out to, and it tries to "know" them by itself being transformed into their shapes. Although this view of the self-as-knower might sound somewhat arcane, its conception of human cognition need not sound entirely outlandish or outdated. Thus, the idea of the inner instrument being modified in the shape of the objects resonates with the Gestalt notion of *isomorphism*, meaning that perceptual experience is shaped by the structure of the brain functions. Also, the notion of the "reaching out" of the inner instrument is suggestive of K. R. Popper's metaphor that knowing is like throwing a searchlight on an object; one reaches out to objects, as it were, looking for things that one *expects* to find, or for data that make sense in light of *preconceived* theories and hypotheses (see Popper, 1979, pp. 341–361). At any rate, an aspect of the Advaita Vedāntic view of the inner instrument that is not compatible with Western conceptions is the idea that the inner instrument reflects pure consciousness (*cit*) of the Ātman, and gets to know the world owing to its capacity to "illuminate."

According to the Advaita Vedānta, truth or reality is self-luminous (*svayaṁ-

prakāśa). Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1) explains the idea of self-luminosity as the "capacity of being ever present in all our acts of consciousness without in any way being an object of consciousness" (p. 474). It involves "pure consciousness" of the self-as-subject where the infinite regress (*anavasthā*) of the "consciousness of consciousness" comes to an end. We may recall here Hilgard's metaphor, mentioned earlier in this chapter, of the reflection of images in a barber shop as an analogy of the self taking a look at itself taking a look at itself ... ad infinitum. American psychologists of the early 20th century had encountered this problem inherent in the self-reflective nature of consciousness. Some of them abandoned the notion of consciousness altogether because of the apparently intractable nature of the infinite regress in conceiving of consciousness of consciousness. By sharp contrast, the Advaita Vedāntists suggest a way out of this problem by conceiving of pure consciousness to be devoid of the subject–object split typical of ordinary states of consciousness. In their view, pure consciousness (*cit*) is a distinctive feature of Ātman–Brahman, which is said to be ubiquitous and provides the bedrock on which awareness of each living being rests. As to how this single ubiquitous, undivided, pure consciousness gave rise to the distinct individual awareness of countless living beings is a mystery, and Advaita Vedāntists refer to it as *māyā*, the primordial illusion. According to some (but not all) of the Advaitist philosophers, pure consciousness of the universe as a whole is said to be reflected in each individual being. Consciousness then appears in different individualized forms like the countless ripples reflecting the shared brilliance of the single sun. The illuminating power of each ripple is not the same, as it is limited by its size, position, the relative impurity of the water, and similar other limiting features. Likewise, the consciousness of each individual living being (*jīva*) is limited by the nature of the sensory and cognitive apparatus it has at its disposal to become aware of, and to know, the world.

Cognition and the Means of Its Validation

According to the Advaita Vedānta, the long journey toward enlightenment must begin from within the domain of *avidyā* or nescience, since nescience is natural to human beings at birth. This idea is in tune with William James's oft-quoted phrase that at birth a babe faces merely a "booming and buzzing mass of confusion." It is inevitable that development of knowledge starts with the sensory–motor equipment provided by nature at the time of birth. Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1) likens humans with animals in being born with a particular set of sensory capacities and in being subject to the lure of rewards and aversion to punishments. Most Advaita Vedāntists seem to implicitly agree with the view expressed by some thinkers of the Mīmāṁsā school that babies, like animals, are capable of only an *indeterminate* form of perception.[12] In this primitive form of perception, called *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*, there is only an unanalyzed, uninterpreted, and unmeaning sensory experience (see Datta, 1932/1972, p. 97). In *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, a highly acclaimed work on Advaita Vedāntic epistemology, Dharmarāja (1972) starts his discussion of the nature of perception (*pratyakṣa*) by distinguishing between the indeterminate and determinate forms of perception.[13]

According to the Advaita Vedānta, the determinate form of perception differs from the indeterminate form in that in the determinate variety, names, universal characteristics shared by the objects with those in its class, adjectives describing specific or distinguishing features of the objects, and the like are added to what is given in sensory experience. While in the indeterminate form (or "stage") of perception one is only aware of the existence (*sanmātram*) of an object without its context and relations, in the determinate stage the relational and contextual meanings are added. As noted earlier, the term *savikalpa* means "with analytical judgment and cognitive construal." As such, *savikalpaka pratyakṣa* implies perception combined with cognitive construction, analysis, and differentiation.

To put it in the context of Western views discussed in Chapter 1, the more primitive indeterminate perception can be said to account for what is "given in experience," while the more complex determinate perception includes what is "added by the mind." At any rate, these two forms of perception (*pratyakṣa*) together constitute but one of the six means to knowledge (*pramā*) espoused by the Advaita Vedāntists. The other five means are: (1) inference, (2) verbal testimony, (3) comparison, (4) nonperception, and (5) postulation. Without going into this list in detail, it may be noted that all five sources involve what is "added by the mind" rather than what is directly given in experience. Nonperception (*anupalabdhi*) presents a particularly interesting case, because it implies the kind of knowledge that is obtained when one is convinced about a proposition such as: "there is no pot now on the ground." Thus, at times, we "know" something with certainty by the very *absence* of that something from what is given in experience. As noted by Datta (1932/1972), by "postulation" (*arthāpatti*) the Advaita Vedāntists mean "the assumption, supposition, or postulation of a fact (*artha* = fact; *āpatti* = *kalpanā* = supposition)" (p. 237). Modern psychology shows how human beings learn to "postulate" the continued existence of objects from their absence in direct experience of the moment. Piaget's studies have shown, for instance, that babies begin to first recognize and then actively search for vanished objects such as toys at the age of about 8 months (Piaget, 1954). The baby's searching behavior shows that she implicitly *assumes* the continued existence of the missing toy in the absence of any evidence of its existence in her current experience. This is as if babies learn to know the world by implicit "postulation" of facts, as the Advaita Vedāntists would call it. Indeed, Piaget (1954, p. 105) attributes the child's mastery of object permanence to the "constructive deduction"—an expression that resonates the Advaita Vedāntic notion of postulation. By giving clear analysis of, and in

attaching importance to, nonperception and postulation as means to knowledge, Advaita Vedānta clearly adopts a constructivist approach. According to this approach, knowing often involves going "beyond the information given," as Jerome Bruner (1973) puts it.

Indeed, Advaita Vedāntic texts provide a detailed analysis of cognitive construction, particularly of assumption and postulation. In *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, for instance, Dharmarāja (1972, Ch. V) gives the following examples of knowing by means of assumption or postulation: (1) When someone utters only the word "door" and nothing more, from the context I *know* for sure that she means "shut the door." (2) When we see that someone is growing fat day by day but claims to be fasting and is also not seen eating during the day, we safely conclude that he must be eating during the night. In the former example, the mind *assumes* that the word "shut" was intended although not heard, and thereby fills the gaps in perceptual experience. Modern psychology provides empirical evidence of the phenomenon of filling the gaps that often appear in perceptual experience. An example from Gestalt psychology relates to the commonplace observation that a broken contour of a circle is almost always recognized as a circle despite many gaps in it. In Dharamrāja's example of the person growing fat, one postulates the cause of the increasing weight despite the lack of evidence of eating by direct observation. In such instances, we tend to depend on circumstantial evidence. In postulation, says Dharmāraja (1972, p. 122), one says "thereby I imagine or construe thus and such" (*anena idam kalpayāmi*). To put it in a broader context, knowing involves a postulation of entities or principles by projecting beyond what is given in experience. This is precisely what scientists do in postulating entities like electrons and black holes, or the square root of minus one, despite the lack of supporting evidence by direct observation. Hume was correct in pointing out that principles such as causality are added by the mind; causes are not given in direct experience.

The constructivist implications of the Advaita Vedāntic view should now be clear. Human cognition is fundamentally a constructive activity; what we claim to *know* often depends in great part on what is supplied by a construing and reasoning mind. Reality, as we know it, is largely a matter of construction. The Advaita Vedāntic notion of the self-as-knower is clearly that of a *constructor* of reality, who relies on a variety of criteria of validation of which sensory experience is but a small part. Here once again we may recall Śaṅkara's famous metaphor of the *jīva* as a moth lying in a cocoon of its own fabrication; we are all trapped in a world of our own making.

Knowledge as an End and as a Means

Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms begin with the following declaration: "Now, therefore, the desire to know Brahman."[14] The knowledge of Brahman is the raison d'être of Vedānta; in other words, knowledge is the goal in itself, not just a means. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (4.38) declares that nothing on earth is as pure or as sacred as knowledge.[15] Moreover, Brahman is itself the Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity (*satyaṁ jñānmanantaṁ brahma*).[16] According to the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (2.14), knowledge of the Brahman is beyond the consideration of what is right and what is not right, beyond what is done and what is not done, and beyond past, present, and future. In explicitly placing the pursuit of knowledge beyond the consideration of right and wrong, the Upaniṣads almost outdo the dispassionate spirit of Greek *theoria* or the valuation of "knowledge for its own sake" so highly adulated by Husserl. Nevertheless, in the Indian tradition, a sophistic, purely "academic" and apparently aimless pursuit of learning has often been shunned. The *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (2.5), for instance, derides the self-proclaimed scholars by likening them to blind men led by a blind man. Moreover, what is valued most is not the empirical knowledge of the world of objects that could help attain mastery over nature, but the knowledge of the Self (*svarūpajñānam*).

Regardless of the fact that most Advaita Vedāntists consider knowledge as an end in itself, there are occasional references in Vedāntic literature where it is viewed also as a means to an end. Dharmarāja, for instance, clearly states that the attainment of highest bliss and the removal of suffering are the twin goals of Advaita Vedānta,[17] although Śaṅkara seems to downplay the role of blissfulness of Brahman as an incentive for attaining the knowledge of Brahman. As is common in Indian thought in general, and in Sāṅkhya and Buddhism in particular, suffering is viewed as the problem of greatest concern. (We shall deal with the Sāṅkhya views on the nature of suffering and its eradication in the next chapter.) As noted in the previous chapter, one of the most dominant themes of the Indian culture is the view that an excess of suffering over pleasure is the invariable outcome of the perpetual cycle of karma and its consequences, and release (*mokṣa*) from it is considered to be the highest goal of life. Sureśvara (1980), a direct disciple of Śaṅkara, for instance, begins his well-known work, *Naiṣkarmya-Siddhi*, with the observation that the attempt to rid oneself of suffering is a tendency common to all creatures, ranging from the creator Brahmā down to a tuft of grass.[18] As noted in the previous chapter, intense desire for the release from the miserable karmic cycle (*mumukṣā*) is, after all, one of the basic prerequisites for anyone who wishes to embark on the Advaita Vedāntic path.

A related idea espoused by many but not all Vedāntists is the notion that knowledge is the *only* means to the release from suffering. It has been stressed by some Vedāntists to the point that the phrase "*jñānādeva tu kaivalyam*," which means that release can be attained only through knowledge, has become a cliché. A possible reason for the extraordinary emphasis on knowledge in the Vedāntic doctrines is the debate with the rival school of Mīmāṁsā, which holds that action (*karma*), especially in the form of rituals enjoined by the Vedas, is *the* means to release. Śaṅkara's (1921) preference for knowledge over action is expressed in

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi (verse #11), where he asserts that not even a million actions can lead to release. In post-Śaṅkara Advaita Vedānta, the relative merits of knowledge versus action in the attainment of release were hotly debated between the followers of Maṇḍna Miśra, who proposed that a combination of knowledge and action (*jñāna–karma samuccaya*) is the best way to attain release, and the followers of Sureśvara and others, who insisted that knowledge is the only means.

Here, we need not discuss the debate between Bhāmati and Vivaraṇa schools[19] of Advaita Vedānta over the relative merits of only knowledge versus knowledge-combined-with-action as means to release (see Suryanarayana Sastri, 1941/1961).[20] In this chapter, we need to consider only those issues that bear on the nature of the Self in relation to cognition and knowledge. The ambiguous usage of the term *jñāna* for knowledge is problematic in this context. Knowledge as an end implies transcendental knowledge (*parā vidyā*) experienced in the fourth state of consciousness (*turīyā avasthā*) and not empirical knowledge (*aparā vidyā*) attainable through the various processes of cognition. Śaṅkara's view, which states that in order to attain the knowledge of the Self, one need not *do* anything, for knowledge, as conceived of in this context, is a state, not a process, is important in this context. Moreover, knowledge is the *natural* state of the Self; as noted above, the very nature of Ātman–Brahman is said to be Truth, Knowledge, and Infinity. Therefore, in order to be released, one's Being is simply to be *discovered*. Self-knowledge is said to be fundamentally different from empirical knowledge. Self-knowledge implies the awareness of that which one is, has been, and always will be, and as such, it must manifest itself as soon as misconceptions about selfhood are removed. By contrast, knowledge of objects (including that of the Jamesian self-as-object) must be *attained* through the processes of cognitive construction and validation and continually be revised in light of continual changes in the knower and the known. In *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* (1.53), Sureśvara (1980, p. 33) argues that release is not something to be created, attained, processed, or changed by means of action. If so, why should anyone bother with the program of action outlined by Advaita Vedānta in the form of listening, reflecting, and contemplating recommended as the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) leading to release?

An answer to this question can be found in some of Śaṅkara's writings. Śaṅkara (1921, 11) explains that the purpose of a recommended course of action is merely to clear up one's mind; learning and contemplating the principles of Advaita Vedānta are merely a secondary means for the attainment of release. If so, why did Śaṅkara go to such great lengths in refuting rival schools of thought and establishing the merits of Advaita Vedānta in volume after volume of discussion? The answer is, it seems to me, that the purpose of the Advaita Vedāntic polemics against the more fallible doctrines is to help clear up the possible sources of confusion. All the arguments and detailed explanation of doctrines have no greater function than pointing the way. Verbal expression, including the most lucid and comprehensive exposition of Advaita Vedānta, cannot in and of itself lead one to

the experience of the Ātman–Brahman, which is, after all, beyond words. The primary justification of the enterprise of scholarship, polemics, study, contemplation, and so on is that it serves to dispel *avidyā*, or "ignorance," which is, after all, the common condition of human beings from birth.

The Nature of "Ignorance" and the Role of Meditation in Its Removal

There is a difference of opinion among the subschools of Advaita Vedānta on the nature of ignorance (*avidyā*) and the role of study and meditation in its removal. According to Vācaspati Miśra, *avidyā* resides in the *jīva*, the embodied person, and since there is a plurality of individual *jīva*s, there are differences in the form of ignorance in each individual (see Mahadevan, 1985, p. 29). As noted, Vācaspati's Bhāmati school prefers a combination of knowledge and action in its removal. It also holds that merely listening to the Vedāntic texts is not enough for attaining self-realization; continued meditation (*prasaṁkhyāna*) is essential. On these matters, the Vivaraṇa school[21] disagrees with the Bhamati school. As to the importance of meditation, the following observation may be made: Mere listening to the doctrines of Advaita Vedānta, or studying them in an impersonal and academic way, often seems to lead to mere scholarship (*pāṇḍityam*) and not necessarily to the annihilation of ignorance and to the resultant divesting of the ego of its power over the individual's life. The removal of the veil of misconstrued notions of the self must open up an inner source of infinite bliss for the individual. If this happens, then there should be no need for the individual to yearn for objects of enjoyment and to guard and preserve them for one's own use. This in turn should manifest in the diminution of egoism and the increase in selfless and compassionate behavior toward others.

The main point here is that Self-knowledge (*svarūpajñānam*, or *ātma sākṣātkāra*)[22] as understood in Advaita Vedānta is not a matter of impersonal mastery of the theory of selfhood. It involves a direct realization of one's inner Being attained through a deeply personal quest that radically transforms the inquirer inside and out. In addition to critical study of the doctrines of Advaita Vedānta, it involves contemplation, or "meditation" as the process is commonly called. From the ancient Upaniṣads to modern times, Vedāntists have recommended a process of studying, reflection, and contemplation (*śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*) as steps to take for attaining self-realization. This process was outlined in general terms in the previous chapter. Here, I shall try first to describe it in the technical terms used in several Advaita Vedāntic texts, and then to interpret it in the language and idiom of cognitive psychology and hermeneutics.

Most Vedāntic texts offer a clear and unanimous account of what is involved in meditation (*prasaṁkhyāna*), regardless of their differing views on its relative importance and efficacy in leading to self-realization. Meditation as recommended

by Advaita Vedāntic texts involves primarily *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, i.e., repeated reflection and deep contemplation, of the fundamental doctrines of Advaita Vedānta.[23] Meditation is alternatively referred to as *dhyāna* or *upāsanā*. In *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* (3.90), Sureśvara (1980) describes meditation (*prasaṁkhyāna*) as the repeated attempt to understand the meaning of sentences like "Thou art that" by means of reasoning according the method of agreement and difference.[24] In his commentary on this statement, Jñānottama clarifies that the primary purpose of this rational activity is to dispel every possible misconstrued notion of selfhood by testing its agreement or disagreement with the meaning of one of the great sentences (*mahāvākyas*), such as "Thou art that," that asserts the identity of the Self or Ātman with Brahman.[25]

To put it in the context of contemporary psychology, let us assume that one writes down an exhaustive self-description listing all kinds of sentences that come to mind. Then one begins examining each statement in light of the great sentence, "Thou art that." The meditator may follow Advaita Vedāntic texts such as the *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka* and rule out every self-definition implying self-as-seen, i.e., self-as-object in Jamesian terms, as a false statement. This would eliminate all definitions of the self in terms of possessions, body, social roles, and attitudes and opinions as falsehoods in regard to the true Self, which is the pure subject. Another acid test for true or false would be to make a "wise discrimination" between the self and the nonself such that the true self is that which is permanent. According to this criterion, all the self-definitions that are already "abandoned selves," as Erikson calls them, as well as the anticipated "future selves," as Markus calls them, are to be abandoned as pseudoselves. For, that which is permanent must be valid in the past, present, as well as the future, and could neither be abandoned nor anticipated. In *Pañcadaśī* (1.37), Vidyāraṇya (1982) recommends that the method of agreement and difference be applied systematically to examine all the five "sheaths" of the *jīva*, meaning the self-definitions relevant to every aspect of one's personhood.

Such an exercise appears deceptively simple; it would seem to be an appropriate exercise for an undergraduate psychology class. Yet it aims at nothing less than prying loose from its foundations a person's deeply entrenched sense of ego-identity. The critical self-examination demanded by the Advaita Vedāntic method requires pondering the nature of personal identity, which is a difficult notion that has eluded some of the mightiest intellectuals. Moreover, meditation is not an impersonal exercise to be engaged in purely in an intellectual manner; it is the most deeply personal inquiry that threatens the dearest and the most cherished aspects of selfhood. What binds the individual to his or her favorite self-definitions is investment of affect in "selfobjects," as the ego-psychologists call them. Diluting the glue of intense love (or hatred) may not be easily accomplished by purely intellectual means. The Advaita Vedāntic methodology does contain a solution for diluting the bonds of attachment, namely, the cultivation of dispassionateness or detachment. Dubbed as the "detachment with regard to gains in this or the otherworldly life" (*ihāmutra-phala-virāga*), the cultivation of dispassionateness is listed as the second of the four aids that the Advaita Vedānta wants aspirants to self-realization to acquire (see Chapter 3, this volume). For most aspirants, this is not a very easy "aid" to acquire in a hurry on the way to self-realization. The cultivation of detachment requires a fair bit of work by way of the modification of how one *feels* about various things in life. And this kind of work cannot be merely intellectual. That is why some Vedāntists recommend combining the "path of knowledge" with the "path of devotion" (*bhakti mārga*), which deals with the emotional aspects of selfhood. We shall examine the nature of this path in the next chapter.

From Thinking to Awareness without Thought

One of the aspects of changes in the meditator described in the Vedāntic texts is the radical change in the meditator's state of consciousness from the intense process of critical *thinking* about selfhood to the experience of the "no-thought zone" of consciousness. Meditation is said to promote concentration of the mind, so that the mind in deep contemplation (*nididhyāsana*) becomes fully rested (*samāhita*) in the Ātman–Brahman. In a fully rested mind, the stream of thoughts seems to come to a halt, and the mind is emptied of any and all thought contents. Why would such a thing happen? The idea here is that, through relentless self-examination, all self-definitions in terms of self-as-object are defeated; all doubts in this regard are dispelled; and the mind is thereby completely cleared of misconstrued notions of the self and the consequent confusion, which is the main stumbling block on the path to wisdom. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (6.19) uses the metaphor of a lamp sitting in a place protected from breeze to describe a mind in a state of repose. Stable resting of the mind is the defining feature of *samādhi*, the "altered state of consciousness" much hallowed in the Indian tradition in general, and in Yoga in particular. In accounting for the nature of deep contemplation (*nididhyāsana*), some Advaita Vedāntists—Mādhava and Sadānanda, for example—use Yogic terminology, describing it as *dhyāna*. According to Patañjali's Yoga, deep contemplation involves "the unchanging flow, of the mental effort to understand the object of meditation, untouched by any other effort of the understanding."[26] In other words, at the advanced stage of meditation one is able to sustain some specific content of cognition for an extended period of time without being distracted by other thoughts. This is said to be the penultimate state that automatically leads to a series of "altered states of consciousness," collectively called the *samādhi*. While the Yoga system describes a set of distinct, hierarchically ordered stages of the *samādhi* experience, the Advaita Vedānta system speaks of only one, and characterizes it as the *nirvikalpa samādhi*. The experience of this state is said to be essentially indescribable. Nevertheless, several texts provide various verbal accounts that attempt to indicate its nature. Let me try to interpret such accounts as relevant to the current context.

In Advaita Vedānta, as in Yoga, meditation is suggested as a way of ridding

the mind of "ignorance" or *avidyā*, i.e., any and all misconstrued notions of the Self. During this process, the mind is temporarily emptied of all cognitive constructions; it enters what may be called a "no-thought zone of consciousness" (*nirvikalpa samādhi*). Here, as in the case of the concept of *nirvikapa pratyakṣa* explained before, the term *nirvikalpa* does indicate the absence of analysis, interpretation, or meaning, plus something more. In *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (verse #241), Śaṅkara (1921) defines *nirvikalpa samādhi* as a state devoid of the distinction between the knower, known, and knowledge.[27] What this means is that, during the state of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, the meditator's experience is devoid of the separation commonly obtained between (1) the experiencing *subject*, (2) the *object* thought, and (3) the *construal* that the object is thus and such. To help interpret what this means in the context of contemporary psychology, it is necessary to understand what Franz Brentano meant by the *intentionality*, i.e., directedness of thought processes, and its analysis by Edmund Husserl. The nature and significance of intentionality is a complex issue that is being studied intensively in contemporary philosophy and cognitive science (e.g., Searle, 1983; Dennett, 1987). It is neither possible nor necessary to explore all its aspects here; given the focus on the Advaita Vedānta perspective and contemporary psychology, my discussion will be restricted to select ideas of Brentano, Husserl, and Harré.

Intentionality of Consciousness: Brentano, Husserl, and Harré

As noted in Chapter 2, Brentano (1874/1974) suggested that consciousness is always *directed* toward something, so that one is afraid *of* something, wishes *for* something, aims *at* something or the other, and so on. Following Brentano's footsteps, Husserl (1933/1977, p. 66) suggested that being conscious involves: (1) the transcendental Ego, the selfsame *I* at the subject pole, (2) various entities, actual or imagined—like a mermaid—at the object pole toward which the mind is directed, and (3) consciousness, which connects the two poles. The similarity between this trilogy and the Vedāntic trilogy of knower, object to be known, and knowledge should be obvious. Despite this fundamental similarity between them, Husserl's view of consciousness is different from the Vedāntic view in one important respect. Husserl insisted that consciousness is *always* consciousness of something, thus denying the possibility of nonintentional states of awareness. By sharp contrast, the Advaita Vedāntists not only claim that the experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi* is devoid of intentionality, but they also value it very highly. The discovery and theorization about extraordinary states of awareness and Being and the development of techniques for realizing them are specialties of the Eastern intellectual and cultural traditions. This is not to say that such states are exclusive to certain parts of the world; indeed, they are probably recognized in various areas across the world throughout the history. However, in the West, they seem to be associated with mysticism, a phenomenon that has been often misunderstood, tabooed, and marginalized. Such marginalization is specifically true for contemporary psychology. Psychologists also tend to ignore Husserl, who generally has been assigned to philosophy. A brief introduction to Husserl's ideas should therefore be in order.

As noted in Chapter 1, Husserl had imbibed the spirit of the Greek *theoria* and shunned the "vocation-like life-interest" and practical attitude typical of the Indian and Chinese cultures. Consistent with this spirit of knowledge-for-its-own-sake, Husserl's primary goal was to attain "apodictic" (i.e., absolutely certain) knowledge. Although very proud of his Greek–European intellectual heritage, Husserl was nevertheless dissatisfied with the dominance in the Europe of his time of the objectivist attitude that denigrated subjective experience. In his view, the result of this attitude was a tendency to annex the spirit to the body, a tendency that was so pernicious that it prompted him to write the "Crisis of European Man" (Husserl, 1936/1965). Against this background, Husserl set out to examine the origin of knowledge in subjective experience. To help turn the mind inward, he decided to suspend or "bracket" all judgments regarding objects in the natural order of space and time and to focus instead on how the mind acquires knowledge of the essence of a given object that underlies the varied and changing images of the same object in the mind. Underlying this search was Kant's idea that the transcendental Ego was the knower that produced knowledge by synthesizing sensory data into the unity of apperception. Husserl hoped to obtain apodictic knowledge by catching the mind in the very act of uniting sensory data into the knowledge of essences.

It is hard to point to any absolute certainties gleaned or solid theoretical gains made by Husserl's studies. At least one historian of Western philosophy has said that in the end, "Husserl's energy was more and more distracted into the Pandora's box of metaphysical and epistemological puzzles that he thought his phenomenological method had eliminated" (Jones, 1975, Vol. 5, p. 280). Nevertheless, during the course of his explorations, Husserl developed a methodology of "phenomenological reduction" or *epoché* (ἐποχή in Greek). Husserl (1931/1962) has described them in detail in his book, *Ideas*. Without going into the details of the reductive methodology, it may be noted that an important aspect of his procedure involved turning attention away from the *objects* of awareness first to the sensory contents of consciousness (*noema*), and then deeper and deeper into the innermost reaches of subjective experience till one reaches the *subject* of experience. Husserl characterizes consciousness as essentially bipolar in nature in that he placed the varied objects of consciousness at the "object pole" and the transcendental Ego at the identical or selfsame "subject pole" (Husserl, 1933/1977, p. 66). Thus, in Husserl's view, consciousness is a link, as it were, that connects a single subject with an array of innumerable objects of intentional awareness. In his writings, Husserl repeatedly asserts that consciousness is *always* a consciousness of something, thereby suggesting that intentionality is an ineluctable feature of consciousness. This view of consciousness is affirmed repeatedly by J-P. Sartre, who

followed Husserl's footsteps. Such a view implicitly denies the possibility of nonintentional states of awareness, such as the *nirvikalpa samādhi*, which, according to Advaita Vedānta, lacks the subject–object polarization.

As several authors (Sinari, 1965; Puligandla, 1970; Paranjpe & Hanson, 1988) have pointed out, Husserl's phenomenological reduction resembles Patañjali's Yoga. First, both involve withdrawing attention from the object, turning inward toward the experience, and ultimately trying to reach the center of experience. Second, phenomenological reduction involves a systematic attempt to modify one's own thought processes. Notwithstanding Husserl's insistence on being purely theoretical, his phenomenological reduction involved *doing* something with one's own consciousness rather than merely thinking about its nature. Thus, Eugen Fink (1933/1970), a trusted student of Husserl, said in his authoritative overview of his teacher's work that "[phenomenological] reduction not only signifies an appeal to its actual performance, but also necessarily requires the performance of an act which places us beyond the horizon of our own possibilities, which 'transcends' our human possibilities" (p. 105). This emphasis on not simply studying but *doing* phenomenology [28] resembles the Yogic emphasis on *knowing* Yoga by actually *doing* Yoga.[29] Moreover, although Husserl denigrated the practical and religious bent of Indian thought, his own practice of phenomenological reduction produced an apparently unintended practical benefit of a religious nature. To put it in Husserl's own words, it led to "a complete personal transformation (Wadlung) which might be compared to a religious conversion, but which even beyond it has the significance of the greatest existential conversion that is expected of mankind" (translated by and quoted in Spiegelberg, 1965, Vol. 1, p. 136).

It is ironic, indeed, that a methodology intended to explore purely theoretical issues produces an apparently valuable "personal transformation" and an "existential conversion." Had Husserl pursued his line of work, perhaps he could have developed some effective methods of personal transformation similar to those of Yoga, and made them available to humankind. It is difficult to say whether Husserl knew of Yoga and other systems of Indian thought, as did many German academics of his day. Nevertheless, given his own expressions of disdain for Indian and Chinese thought, any attempts by him toward East–West convergence seemed out of the question. Unfortunately, despite promises of valuable transformation of the self by means of phenomenological reduction, Husserl abandoned the further development of his methods. His students, too, abandoned the methods of reduction, and the phenomenological movement turned instead toward hermeneutics.

More recently, Harré (1983) has joined the ranks of Western authors who claim that consciousness must always be intentional. He makes this by way of criticism of publications in the 1970s about "altered states of consciousness," which he dismisses as a kind of "rash of talk," and as noted earlier in this chapter, assigns it to "fringe psychology." In his opinion, the idea of "altered states" of consciousness

> has been formulated in a rather muddled way.... Those 'states' seem to be experiences of novel kinds of intentional objects or novel appearances of ordinary objects.... For a being to be conscious at all, the relational pencil from the self to a field of various objects of awareness, some of which can be attended to, must be maintained. (1983, p. 163)

That nonintentional states can in fact be experienced is a claim made by students of Yoga, who for centuries have been publishing books and papers on how to attain them. Interested persons are invited to try their methods and verify the claims. Denying the claims out of hand without trying the methods reminds us of the Aristotelian scholars who refused to look into Galileo's telescope to verify his claims about Jupiter's satellites. Belief in the inevitability of intentionality seems to be as pervasive today in the West as was the presumption that functions of the autonomic nervous system such as the pulse rate could not be brought under voluntary control. And maybe this belief about intentionality will change just as the presumption about the autonomic functions was changed after the results of psychophysiological experiments on Yogis became widely known.

As just noted, Husserl claimed that his phenomenological reduction resulted in a personal transformation that seemed extremely valuable. However, even Husserl's students, such as Fink, seemed to ignore them; they did not think it was important enough to follow up. In his famous work on the history of the phenomenological movement, Herbert Spiegelberg does mention Husserl's "greatest existential conversion that is expected of mankind," but he literally relegates it to a mere footnote. Likewise, as noted earlier in this chapter, Harré is aware of the claim that persons who attain altered states tend to become selfless, but apparently he fails to see the importance of such an outcome. One gets the impression that in Western philosophy and psychology there is a cultivated sense of aversion for any kind of personal transformation. By sharp contrast, personal transformation was the raison d'être of several systems of Indian philosophy and psychology such as Śāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta. To help understand this remarkable contrast, it would be useful to take a look at certain aspects of the cultural history of the West noted by Michel Foucault.

Psychology and the "Technologies of the Self"

In an essay titled "Technologies of the Self," Michel Foucault (1982/1988) presented historical analysis of the development in the West of the "hermeneutics of the self" in two different but related contexts: the Greco-Roman philosophy and Christian spirituality. In this essay he considers both theories as well as practices in relation to the twin injunctions, "Know yourself" and "Take care of yourself." In this context, he describes the "technologies of the self" as practices that

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault, 1982/1988, p. 18)

It should be clear that the Advaita Vedāntic program for self-realization can be correctly characterized as a "technology of the self" in a Foucauldian sense. It selectively combines the features of certain distinct Western prototypes: (1) Plato's concern with "Know thyself" and his dialogical approach to it in predominantly "secular" or nondenominational context; (2) St. Augustine's deeply personal critical self-examination and spiritual yearning; and (3) the spiritual practices and the relevance of exegesis of scriptural texts in that context as illustrated in the *Spiritual Practices of Saint Ignatius* (see Ambruzzi, 1961). Such comparisons have of course serious limitations, for there are important differences as well. Thus, while St. Augustine's concern with *sin* and Vedāntic concern with *suffering* seem to be comparable in their depth and sincerity, sin and suffering are two very different types of the human condition. They are based on radically different notions of cosmogony, causality, and justice. These, in turn, are different from the Freudian and existentialist views of the human condition and of therapy.

Indeed, it is hard to name even a single system in the mainstream of contemporary psychology that can be said to offer a technology of the self in the Foucauldian sense. The varied applications of modern psychology have developed mainly in the contexts of medicine, the military, education, industry, and commerce. In all these contexts, the psychologists tend to emulate the role of either a professional doctor who offers diagnosis and cure, or of a technologist who provides advice on how to fix a faulty mechanism. There are of course applications of psychology in the contexts of spirituality and religion. However, these are sequestered away from the academe and handed over to the church where the pastoral psychologists try to heal sick souls. There is a strict division between the secular universities on the one hand and the religious institutions on the other. It seems as if the scientists are still nursing the wounds of Galileo, who was hurt by the Aristotelian scholastics as well as by churchmen of his times.

The development of modern psychology as a *science* contributed to the lack of the development of technologies of the self within the field of modern psychology in North America. From its beginning in Europe in the 17th century, science had little to do with purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality, which were the typical concerns of the traditional technologies of the self. Francis Bacon's vision of science was clearly that of mastering the forces of nature for the benefit of the humankind. As noted, J. B. Watson launched a behaviorist psychology modeled after the natural sciences, Max Meyer (1922) tried to banish the self along with the theologian's soul from psychology, and B. F. Skinner explicitly followed Meyer's "psychology of the other-one" in develping his behavioral technology. In contrast, Yoga is clearly a technology of the self; it has developed techniques for controlling one's *own* body and mind. Technologies for *controlling others* can be understandably different from technologies such as those of Yoga and Vedānta, which are explicitly aimed at the *emancipating oneself* from suffering arising from misconstrued notions of one's own making.

Advaita Vedāntic Meditation, Psychotherapy, and Attitude Change

As noted in Chapter 3, Śaṅkara uses a medical metaphor, describing Advaita Vedāntic meditation (*sādhanā*) as a combination of knowledge and dispassionateness prescribed as a cure for the "fever" of insatiable desires.[30] In the same vein, in his commentary on Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (1978, 2.15), Vyāsa suggests that suffering is the disease; mistaken identification of the unchanging Self (*Puruṣa*) with the ever-changing world (*Prakṛti*) is the cause of the disease; correct vision (*samyagdarśanam*) is the medicine; and complete riddance of mistaken identity is the desired state of health. As noted by Halbfass (1991b, Ch. 7), such medical metaphors have been common to many systems of Indian thought. Against this background, Advaita Vedāntic meditation is comparable to the forms of psychotherapy developed by Aaron Beck and by George Kelly. The main point of similarity that justifies the comparison of these otherwise different enterprises is that both use what may be called *cognitive devices* in bringing about a desirable change in an individual's life.

Aaron Beck suggests what he calls the "Socratic method" as a therapeutic strategy to cure depression (Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985, pp. 177–178). What Beck means by it is that the patient is to be engaged in a dialogue of questions and answers guided by logic in a manner typical of Socrates's search for wisdom through dialectical and critical thinking. The traditional Indian method has an uncanny resemblance to the Socratic dialectics. The ancient Upaniṣads contain several dialogues designed to convey to the listener wisdom concerning the nature of the true Self. Innumerable philosophical texts in India are written in the format of conversations between the proponent of a viewpoint and his adversaries in debate. This is very similar to the spirit of the Socratic dialogues, and Beck has tried to introduce this type of a format in his therapeutic intervention designed to cure depression. The similarity of its aim and method to Śaṅkara's idea of critical self-examination as a method to cure the desires arising from ignorance should now be obvious. Instead of discussing this similarity in detail, it would be better to turn to George Kelly's therapeutic strategy, since I think it will properly bring out the nature of the cognitive aspects of the Advaita Vedāntic method of meditation.

Kelly's therapeutic strategy may be characterized as a systematic cognitive *reconstruction* of the individual's view of herself and the world around her. The therapist attempts first to identify erroneous constructs that are ineffective in correctly predicting significant events in the client's life, and then help her replace them with more accurate—or serviceable—constructs. This implies an attempt to help improve the client's adaptation with her environment. Advaita Vedānta, too, focuses on an individual's cognitive constructs, but the aim there is not simply to change a few constructs here and there, but rather to have the individual dismantle, or at least temporarily suspend, *all* of the constructs that define her self in relation to the world. What makes this process particularly similar to the Kellyian therapy

is that both pit the current constructs against their opposites and/or alternatives to seriously question, loosen, weaken, or discard established constructs. Kelly's constructs are dichotomous or bipolar, and as noted in the first part of this chapter, his technique calls for a "slot movement" of an item back and forth from one pole of the construct to its opposite. For instance, a person who characterizes himself as a weakling may be asked to move this characterization back and forth between the opposite poles, self versus nonself (I am weak versus I am not weak), so that the image of being a weakling is loosened from the self pole, and after repeated attempts, identified with the nonself. It is important to remember in this context that the Advaita Vedāntic method asks a meditator to use the method of agreement and difference (*anvaya*, *vyatireka*). Any and all definitions of the self as an object—as body, social roles, and so on—are to be loosened and detached from the self-pole and moved to the opposite side to the nonself. Given the strong emotional attachments of the "I" with the "Me," it requires innumerable attempts to separate them. The changes that Advaita Vedānta tries to bring about in a meditator are far more radical and far-reaching, since they aim at what Kelly calls "core constructs," i.e., constructs that define and maintain a person's very identity and existence.

Meditation may be viewed as a severe attack on a person's psychosocial identity. A spiritual aspirant who successfully completes the prescribed course of meditation would recognize his or her psychosocial identity to be just what it is: a product of the past that is functional in carrying on the bodily functions and social life, but not something inextricably attached to the "I." No matter how strongly one feels attached to the self-definitions that comprise one's psychosocial identity, none of them are inexorable. As noted in the previous chapter, Erik Erikson concluded that psychosocial identity is forever revisable, which means that any and all self-definitions could in principle be suspended. The ultimate basis of self-sameness does not reside in any aspect of one's psychosocial identity; it resides, as Erikson suggested, in one's *transcendental* center of awareness. To put it in other words, the unity and selfsameness of the "I" is fully realized as belonging to the Being of the blissful consciousness and not to the "evolving configuration of roles" that parades as one and the same person.

Sometimes meditation is said to focus on the destruction of the mind (*manonāśa*), or "egocide," i.e., killing of the ego. Moreover, with the attainment of self-realization, a spiritual aspirant is said to end his or her life. Having realized its true nature, the soul is said to shed the body with which it felt erroneously identified. Such a result has been called *videha mukti*, i.e., the attainment of emancipation upon death. However, according to an alternative view, persons continue to live after attaining self-realization in a state called *jīvanmukti*, i.e., the state of emancipation while still alive. We shall consider the affective and behavioral characteristics of self-realized persons in the next two chapters. Here, let us try to understand the nature of Vedāntic meditation in the language of "deconstruction."

Meditation and "Deconstruction"

In an essay published in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Mark Epstein (1988) has suggested that Buddhist "insight meditation" involves a "deconstruction of the self." Edward Sampson (1989) has used the same expression, "deconstruction of the self," to designate several recent trends in Western thought, all of which, in his opinion, are rejecting the "North American version of psychology's subject—as a self-contained individualism" (p. 1). Of these trends, he has chosen to analyze the psychological implication of the challenges to individualistic conceptions of selfhood from two trends: (1) critical theory originating in the Frankfurt School, and (2) "deconstructionism," a "relatively recent perspective developed within the post-structuralist literary criticism and linguistic analysis [which] has challenged all notions that involve the primacy of the subject (or author)" (p. 1). "Deconstruction" is a popular term that has acquired differing meanings. It is tempting to use this term to describe the analysis of "insight" meditation of the Advaita Vedāntic and Buddhist traditions for the following reasons:

1. In view of the "constructed" (*kalpita*) nature of the ego or empirical self, Advaita Vedānta seems to call for its "deconstruction." If, according to Śaṅkara's metaphor, the individual can be thought of as a moth living in a cocoon of its own construction, then we can imagine the "unpacking" of a worldview of one's own cognitive construction so as to liberate oneself from its limitations.
2. Deconstruction primarily involves the critical analysis of texts and of the grounds of the theoretical systems contained therein (Johnson, 1981, p. xv). The Advaita Vedāntic method quite clearly requires an in-depth critical analysis (*manana*) of the Upaniṣadic texts and an understanding of the foundations of its system in addition to other requirements.
3. The concept or the *erasure* of false conceptions leading to the *transparency* of consciousness is a metaphor common to Advaita Vedānta as well as Derrida (1966/1978). (This point will be discussed, as it deserves clarification.)
4. As noted by Johnson (1981):

> [A]s Derrida himself admits, the very notion of a perfectly adequate *science* or *-logy* belongs to the logocentric discourse which the science of writing would try, precisely, to put in question. Derrida thus finds himself in the uncomfortable position of attempting to account for an error by means of tools derived from that very error. (p. x; emphasis original)

The situation is similar in Advaita Vedānta, which tries to use language and dialectical thinking to prove their own limits and to put themselves out of action.

5. Gayatri Spivak (1976) translates Derrida's term "sous rature" as "under-erasure" and explains it thus: "This is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both the word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible)" (p. xiv). In a similar vein, the Advaita Vedāntic program of self-realization may be said to aim at "erasing" the empirical ego of a person *without* eradicating it beyond recognition or putting it *totally* out of commission. At least, in my opinion, such would be the view of the school of Advaita Vedāntists that believes that self-realized persons continue to live after attaining enlightenment as liberated souls (*jīvanmukta*). (This is of course different from the other school that believes in the discontinuation of life upon liberation, called *videhamukti*.) Thus, Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950), who was widely believed to be a self-realized being, had "crossed out" his identity as the son of Sundaram Ayyar and Alagammal, but he was recognized as the same village lad, Ramana, by his relatives after he lived incognito for years while practicing meditation or *sādhanā*. Although the relatives of Ramana knew beyond a doubt that this was the same person as the lad who had grown up in their midst, he treated them with no special attachment, as might be expected from a normal individual. He showed no signs of ego involvement, thereby indicating that his childhood ego-identity had been defeated. To put it in deconstructionist terms, the entity "Ramana" in the box has been crossed out, although it is still recognizable.

Notwithstanding such similarities between Derridan deconstruction and program of meditation recommended by the Advaita Vedānta, there are some fundamental differences between them: While the former is an approach to literary criticism and remains as such, the latter, having its roots in exegesis of scriptural texts, has developed into a full-scale philosophy, theory of personality, technique of meditation, and a way of life. Moreover, despite Advaita Vedānta's emphasis on the critical understanding of scriptural texts, its primary purpose is to apply the meaning to one's own life and to undertake to deconstruct the ego and the world of one's own construction.

If, indeed, the ego can be deconstructed as claimed here, what, we may ask, happens to the cognitive processes of the person after the deconstruction is completed? The *Bhagavad-Gītā* provides clues for an answer to this question in its descriptions of persons after they attain liberation following the path of knowledge according to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, 2.54–72), or of devotion according to the Bhakti-Yoga (12.13–19), or in other ways of spiritual self-

discipline (5.5–28; 14.22–27). The cognitive aspect of such individuals' functioning is described commonly in terms of a stable intellect (*sthita prajña*). As noted in the previous chapter, such persons no longer behave in egoistic or selfish ways. Against the backdrop of the discussion in this chapter so far, we can try to understand in terms of cognitive principles what this means and why such results must follow from the process of deconstruction. First, it must be taken for granted that any living person, whether liberated or otherwise, must depend on sensory, perceptual, and cognitive structures and processes for carrying on one's daily business in life. What meditation is supposed to put out of commission is the narrowness of a person's ego, or its "totalitarian" character, not his or her cognitive capacities. I think it is safe to assume that the normal strengths as well as inherent limits of such adjuncts (*upādhi*) would persist in the individual after the ego is deconstructed. Presumably, the person retains all the language skills acquired since childhood, as well the dialectical skills honed during the process of meditation. What may be lost is the kind of influence that the ego exerts on cognition.

To put it in metaphorical terms, loosened under the attack of relentless questioning, the "I" is no longer inextricably tied down to the ego; rather, it is firmly anchored in the transcognitive and unchanging Brahman. As such, the ongoing cognitive processes are not allowed to sway every which way with the continually changing pattern of the ego's attachments; as such, they are stabilized. In my opinion, it is in this sense that the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (1948/1973, 2.54–72) describes the self-realized person as a person with a stable intellect (*sthita prajña*).

The effects of anchoring and stabilizing one's intellect may be described within the cognitive frameworks of Greenwald and Markus, discussed previously. It may be recalled that, according to Greenwald (1980), the self-serving character of the ego introduces biases in the cognitive functioning such that the individual tends to revise one's past history and narratives of events that erroneously perceive the self to be more correct, nicer, and more effective than deserved. In many instances, such egocentricity results in totalitarian attitudes whereby a person tends to unthinkingly reject ideas that do not fit one's currently held beliefs and opinions. If indeed the ego has repeatedly weighed mutually opposing arguments, has tried to go beyond dialectics, and has become more tolerant of contrary opinions, then it may have no reason to have excessive liking for friends who agree and excessive dislike for enemies who disagree. True to this spirit, the *Gītā* described the self-realized person as manifesting equanimity in the face of friends and enemies, praise and blame. Such a person need not also indulge in constructing and revising images of the self in the past and the future, and feel happy or sad depending on whether the possible selves seem positive or negative, as described by Markus and Nurius (1987). A person who has discovered the true Self in the eternal and blissful Ātman–Brahman would have discovered an inner source of undiminishing joy. He or she need not construe the "I" as an imaginary future

self; one who is achored in Being here and now need no longer be infatuated with Becoming happy in the future.

Ordinarily, one's sense of identity is anchored in one's current thoughts, feelings, and actions. While this is common experience, it has been acknowledged by Patañjali in ancient times and by James and Erikson in modern times. Being closely attached to the current thought often results in the sense that it represents *the* truth, sometimes leading to egotism and to intolerance of alternative positions. One can overcome such egotism and intolerance by being firmly convinced that the true Self is beyond all thoughts and the current Thinker. Such conviction can follow from the discovery of the no-thought-zone of consciousness by means of meditation. The discovery of the no-thought-zone may be explained in terms of the Freudian metaphor of the mind as a "mystic writing-pad" (Freud, 1925/1953), which Jacques Derrida (1966/1978) has revived in the context of his account of deconstruction. This metaphor likens the mind to a child's toy in which words written or marks made using a wooden stylus on a translucent sheet overlying a wax tablet are visible as long as the translucent sheet remains attached to the wax. When the sheet is pulled up, the words or marks disappear. The human mind may be likened to the top sheet of the "mystic writing-pad" insofar as it is devoid of content in its nascent state and allows limitless rewriting of its contents. The trick lies in being able to empty mind's contents; one way of doing so is to recognize that current thoughts are not absolute but only relative truths, and to set them aside—like letting the writing stay on the wax rather than on the translucent top sheet of the writing pad, as it were. Critical self-examination is a way of accomplishing this. In several articles, Ashok Gangadean (1976, 1979) has explained the Buddhist use of dialectics and the Vedāntic methods of meditation in this context, and has interpreted the process in the light of Western philosophy and logic from Plato and Aristotle to Wittgenstein and Frege. Space does not permit further discussion of this topic.

Liberation with Knowledge Only or with Other Means

Before concluding this chapter on self and cognition, it may be noted, once again, that Śaṅkara and several of his followers consider knowledge, or "cognition" as we may call it, to be the *only* means to self-realization. As noted by Suryanarayana Sastri (1941/1961, p. 241), Advaita Vedāntists were not unaware of the contention that cognition itself is a mental act. Yet they made a sharp distinction between cognition on the one hand and action in the form of performing rituals and meditation on the other. Their defense of this distinction was primarily the argument that cognition is dependent on objects that it is expected to faithfully reflect, while activity is optional, depending on the will of the performer. As such, while cognition is expected to lead to an unconditional outcome, action is not. Whatever the arguments in defense of cognition, overemphasis on it was perhaps

important in view of the repudiation of the heavy reliance on ritual in the rival school of Mīmāṁsā.

Be that as it may, as noted earlier, several Advaita Vedāntists followed Maṇḍana Miśra in avoiding a sharp distinction between cognition and action, and advocated a combination of cognition and action in the attainment of self-realization. As well, according to some interpreters, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, one of three basic source books of Vedānta,[31] advocates nonattachment to the outcomes of action as a means to liberation, although Śaṅkara insists on the efficacy of knowledge *alone*. However, Śaṅkara is not opposed to devotion as an alternative means to liberation. Indeed, he even considers it to be an excellent means to liberation, except that he defines it not so much as love for God, but rather as investigaiton into the nature of selfhood. Śaṅkara himself is said to have been the author of several devotional poems that express somewhat strong feelings, but these are sequestered from his voluminous writings, which are terse and generally "dry." He was not given to the sentimentalism that seems to be the hallmark of those for whom devotion to God is their preferred approach to self-transformation. In the next chapter, we shall return to this topic after considering the psychological implications of devotion within the context of the relationship between self and affect.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Professor John Broughton for helping me clarify the Piagetian concepts such as the epistemic subject and egocentricity, and for his numerous useful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.
2. For a detailed discussion of Piaget's concept of the epistemic subject, see Broughton (1987).
3. A fuller discussion of Piaget's views on the implications for epistemology of Gödel's theorem may be found in Beth and Piaget (1966, pp. 53–59).
4. The reference cited here by Piaget is P. Natrop's *Die logischen Grundlagen des exacten Wissenschaften*, published in Berlin in 1910.
5. Scrooge is the name of a character in Charles Dickens's famous story, *A Christmas Carol*, in which Scrooge gets completely transformed from a stingy and nasty man to a generous and nice man after being visited by three ghosts. This classic was originally published in 1843, and is widely available in numerous editions.
6. Harré's attitudes about "altered states" are reflected in many pejorative expressions in his writing. Thus, he talks about the *rash* of talk about the *alleged* altered states, and repeatedly refers to the literature on it as lying on the *fringe* of psychology (see Harré, 1983, pp. 163–165). That the literature on altered states is widely viewed as being on the fringe of mainstream psychology partly reflects the attitudes of the mainstream, and it seems to me that partly the questionable reputation of this field of studies is a result of wishy-washy and nonrigorous nature of several publications on altered states.
7. In his translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Radhakrishnan (1948/1973, p. 355) mentions Śaṅkara's (1978, 18.14) expression *kartā upādhilakṣaṇo bhoktā*, and adds the adjective *avidyākalpito*, meaning "constructed from nescience," or imagined. I could not find the word *avidyākalpito* in the Motilal

Banarsidass edition of Śaṅkara's commentary of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (18.14). However, I find such characterization consistent with Śaṅkara's discussion of the nature of the self-as-knower (*kṣetrajña*) in his commentary on *Gītā* (13.2).

8. nanu pramāśrayaḥ pramātā sa eva kartā bhoktā | (Abhyankar, 1928/1962, p. 19).
9. I am grateful to Professor Gaya Charan Tripathi for enlightening me regarding the nuances of Sanskrit teminology in this matter, and its Latin, Greek, English, and other Indo-European parallels.
10. For a detailed discussion of *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa pratyakṣa*, see D. M. Datta (1932/1972, pp. 93–102). In his *History of Philosophy*, S. N. Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1) discusses the distinction between *nirvikalpa* and *savikalpa pratyakṣa* in the context of the various schools of Indian thought: Sāṅkya-Yoga (p. 261), Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (p. 334), Mīmāṁsā (p. 378), and Vedānta (p. 484).
11. The oft-quoted lines of the *Īśa* Upaniṣad (#11) are as follows:

    vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yastadvedobhayaṁsaha|
    avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā vidyayā 'mṛtamaśnute||

    The exact meanings of the concepts of *vidyā* and *avidyā* are controversial, and are difficult to interpret in Western terms. A discussion of some of the problems in interpretation can be found in Belwalkar and Ranade (1927, Vol. 2, pp. 171–174).
12. In a footnote to his discussion about indeterminate perception, Datta (1932/1972, p. 97) quotes the following words from *Siddhānta-candrikā*, a commentary on a Mīmāṁsā text called *Śāstra-dīpikā*: "Tiraścām bālānāñ ca nirvikalpakenaiva sarvo vyavahāraḥ|". To paraphrase, the activities of animals and children are characterized by only an undifferentiated form of perception.
13. As pointed out by D. M. Datta (1932/1972), Vedāntic writings on perception are neither very elaborate nor entirely clear. Nevertheless, Datta's own analysis in *Six Ways of Knowing* clarifies the Vedāntic view of perception and cognition. His analysis is particularly useful for us because Datta interprets the Vedāntic view not only in the context of the six major schools of Indian thought, but also in the light of early 20th-century Western thought. My reconstruction of Vedāntic views of perception and cognition follows Datta's analysis.
14. S. Radhakrishnan (1960/1968, p. 227) translates "athāto brahmajijñāsā" as "Now therefore the desire to know Brahman."
15. na hy jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitramiha vidyate| *Bhagavad-Gītā* (4.38).
16. *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad, 2.1.
17. Says Dharmarāja (1972, Ch. VIII, p. 203): "tatra sukhaduḥkhābhāvau mukhye prayojane," i.e., "there [in Vedānta] attainment of happiness and removal of suffering are the two main goals."
18. ābrahmastambaparyantaiḥ sarvaprāṇibhiḥ sarvaprakārasyāpi duḥkhasya svarasata eva jihāsitattvāttannivṛttyarthā pravṛttirasti svarasata eva | Opening sentence of Sureśvara's (1980, p. 1) *Naiskarmya-Siddhi*.
19. Respectively named after *Bhāmati*, the title of Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on Śaṅkara's commentary of Bādarāyaṇa's aphorisms, and *Vivaraṇa*, the title of Prakāśātman's elucidation of Padmapāda's commentary on the same work of Śaṅkara. For a discussion of the differences in the doctrines of these schools, see T. M. P. Mahadevan (1985).
20. In his essay "Jñānādeva tu kaivalyam," S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (1941/1961) has presented an interesting discussion of the debate over the issue of "knowledge only" as a means of release.
21. So named after *Vivaraṇa*, the title of Prakāśātman's commentary on Padmapāda's *Pañcapādika*, itself a commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahma–Sūtra–Bhāṣya*.
22. In his commentary on Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's *Siddhāntabindu*, V. S. Abhyankar (1928/1962, p. 129) specifically uses the term *sākṣātkāra* in this context.
23. Sometimes the most fundamental doctrine of the Vedānta is said to be encapsulated in four *mahā vākyas* or "great sentences." Vidyāraṇya's *Pañcadaśī* (1982, Ch. 5) identifies them to be the following four aphorisms derived from various texts of traditions associated with the four branches of the Veda (Ṛg-, Yajur-, Sāma-, and Atharva-Veda): "prajñānaṁ brahma" (*Aitareya* Upaniṣad, 3.3); "ahaṁ brahmāsmi" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 1.4.10); "tattvamasi" (*Chāndogya* Upaniṣad, 6.8.7); and "ayamātmā brahma" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, 4.4.5).

24. nanu prasaṁkhyānaṁ nāma tattvamasyādi śabdārthānvayavyatireka yuktiviṣayabuddhyāmreḍanam | (Sureśvara, 1980, *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, 3.90, p. 160).
25. Jñānottama's words in his commentary called Candrikā are: viparītabhāvanālakṣaṇa pratibandhanirāsenaiva upayogānnididhyāsanasya| (see Sureśvara, 1980, p. 160).
26. This is a translation by Rāma Prasāda (1912, p. 180) of Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's aphorism 3.2. The Sanskrit words of the aphorism are: "tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam," and those of Vyāsa's commentary are: "tasmindeśe dhyeyālambanasya pratyayasyaikatānatā sadṛśaḥ pravāhaḥ pratyayāṇtareṇāparāmṛṣto dhyānam."
27. jñātṛjñeyajñānaśūnyamanantaṁ nrivikalpakam | (Śaṅkara, 1921, verse 241).
28. Herbert Spiegelberg (1975) has captured the emphasis in Husserlian phenomenology on actually performing procedures such as phenomenological reduction by choosing the title "*Doing* phenomenology" for one of his books.
29. In his commentary on Patañjali's (1978) Yoga aphorism 3.6, Vyāsa said "yogo yogena jñātavyo," which may be correctly paraphrased to mean that Yoga can be understood only by *doing* yoga.
30. See note 1, Chapter 3, this volume.
31. The three basic sources of the doctrines of Vedānta are the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-Gīta*, and Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms. The three together are called the *prasthānatrayī*.

5

Self-as-Enjoyer–Sufferer

The Psychology of Affect

In the daily use of the English language, the words *feeling*, *emotion*, and *affect* are often used interchangeably. The *Webster's Tenth New Collegiate Dictionary* assigns them overlapping but different meanings. It defines *emotion* as "a psychic and physical reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling and physiologically involving changes that prepare the body for immediate vigorous action." In contrast, *affect* is defined as "the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes." The word *feeling* has many different connotations including: sensation experienced through the sense of touch, as well as "the undifferentiated background of one's awareness considered apart from any identifiable sensation, perception, or thought." Of these terms, contemporary psychology uses *emotion* most often. This is in keeping with the emphasis placed on observable aspects of emotions, namely physiological changes and bodily movements. Although subjective aspects of feelings and emotions are not completely neglected, only a minority of contemporary psychologists seem to focus on them. The term *affect*, which clearly focuses on the subjective aspect of emotions apart from bodily changes, has not been the central topic of study in modern psychology.

In India, emotions and the attendant physiological changes and physical movements were the focus of Bharata's theory of dramatics (ca. 200 BCE–200 CE). This makes sense insofar as Bharata's work was addressed primarily to dramatists and actors for whom the visible expression of emotion is obviously critical. It is in this context that the concept of emotion (*bhāva*) was studied in great detail. However, Bharata's commentators, such as Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta, started to look at the experience of the dramatic art from the spectators' vantage point. As such, their focus shifted from the expressive aspect of emotion to its *experience*. Many of Bharata's medieval commentators were also well versed in Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, Kashmir Shaivism, and other such systems of philosophy and spiritual self-development. Their interest in the broader philosophical issues

and their spiritual concerns led them to the examination of the nature of pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering, and their relationship with the attainment of the highest good in human life.

In the European tradition, too, the study of emotion has a long history that reaches back to the ancient Greeks. Both Plato and Aristotle were deeply concerned with the nature of happiness and its relationship with ethics. In *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle proposes *eudaemonism*, a thesis that affirms happiness as the chief goal of human life. Over the millenia, several major thinkers have made important contributions to the study of affect: several of the Stoic philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza, Hume, Darwin, James, Dewey, Ryle, Heidegger, and Sartre, to name just a few prominent ones (Calhoun & Solomon, 1984). In psychology, emotion has continued to be an active area of research, regardless of its relative neglect during the heyday of behaviorism. In the intellectual history of India, too, various aspects of affective life have been a matter of great interest throughout the centuries. There are, however, major differences between the persistent themes that have dominated the Western, as compared with the Indian, approaches to emotion.

In the history of Western thought, emotions often have been viewed as sharply different from, and in conflict with, reason. While some thinkers like Hume have thought that "[r]eason is, and ought only to be the slave of passions" (Hume, 1739/1978, p. 415), others like Kant have sought to subordinate passion to reason. By and large, however, in the Western tradition, reason has been generally considered in positive terms, while emotions are often painted with a dark brush. During Europe's Age of Enlightenment in particular, reason was believed to contribute to impartiality, truth, enlightenment, moral judgment, harmony, and so on, but passions were considered to be irrational, leading to sinfulness, and to have a disorganizing and detrimental effect on human behavior. In the Indian tradition, emotions such as lust and anger have been occasionally viewed as ruinous (e.g., *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 1948/1973, 2.61–63; 3.37–43), but they are not consistently vilified, nor is reason glorified, as in the West. While the modern Western studies of emotion have been conducted in a predominantly secular, scientific, and biomedical context, the most prominent Indian contributions to the study of emotion have come from dramaturgical and esthetic theories, which have found a central place in the theory and practice of religious devotion.

Another point of divergence is that while Indian approaches to the affective aspect of life often have focused on the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer, such a focus is uncommon is Western approaches. Indeed, the Sanskrit word *bhoktā*, which means the "feeler" of emotions, so to speak, or the "one who enjoys and suffers," is virtually untranslatable in English. The same is true about the related term *bhoga*, which has several connotations, such as experiencing pleasure or pain, savoring or relishing, sexual enjoyment, and so on. It is derived from the root *bhuj*, meaning to eat, drink, or consume; to enjoy a meal; to experience a reward or undergo punishment; and also to suffer. The lack of English equivalents to the Sanskrit terms *bhoga* and *bhoktā* and their cognates in several Indian languages suggests some basic difference in cultural perspectives on the experience of affect. As such, these terms deserve some explanation here.

First, it is important to note here that the verb *bhuj* combines both enjoyment and suffering. Thus, it covers the entire spectrum of emotions along a single continuum extending from the greatest happiness to the worst suffering. Second, the term *bhoktā* recognizes the self as the *single* subject who experiences all kinds of emotions, pleasant or unpleasant, throughout the life cycle—and even across a series of life cycles. The self in this sense is the "experiencer," meaning enjoyer as well as sufferer, the one to whom life presents itself as a kaleidoscope of experiences colored with innumerable shades of affect. Third, in legal terms, the owner of a property is its *bhoktā*, whose right it is to enjoy it as he or she pleases. By the same token, the person is also the *bhoktā* of the responsibilities (taxes?) and misfortunes (theft?) that might accrue as a result of the ownership. The concept of *bhoktā* pithily conveys the basic idea behind the Law of Karma, namely, the thesis that the agent must inevitably suffer consequences of bad actions, just as he or she claims the rewards for good actions. Fourth, the conceptual collocation of the positive and negative polarities of affect opens the door for the conception of an experience that is qualitatively different from both pleasure and pain, happiness or suffering. The Sanskrit word *ānanda* is used to designate this "positive" experience beyond pleasure and pain. The usual English translation of *ānanda* is bliss, meaning complete happiness, but this is an approximation at best. Finally, careful examination of the nature of the one who enjoys and suffers is the most crucial feature of Indian approaches to affect. As we shall see later in this chapter, various schools of Indian thought suggest different conceptions of the nature of the self as enjoyer–sufferer, with matching methods to overcome suffering.

Given these sharp contrasts, it is more difficult to converge Indian and Western approaches to emotion than those to cognition and action. Moreover, the diversity of approaches to emotion within the Western context alone makes it difficult to put them together into a common conceptual framework, making it even more difficult to make meaningful comparisons across cultures. Against this background, I shall be selective and include only those aspects of Indian and Western approaches to emotion that lend themselves to a relatively more meaningful juxtaposition. For want of a deeper and more comprehensive metatheoretical framework than the various theories, I shall occasionally point out ontological, epistemic, and axiological principles to help illustrate pertinent points of contrast and similarity. After sketching a selective overview of relevant aspects of certain Western approaches, I shall move on to a few distinctive Indian perspectives on the relationship between the self and affect.

Western Psychological Views of Emotion

In his *Republic*, Plato (1941) presents his view of the tripartite psyche, where each part is the seat of a different principle: reason, spirit, and appetite. In his model, appetitive psyche is clearly the seat of emotions. Plato assigns appetite the lowest position in a hierarchical arrangement of the three parts. He considers appetite to be "irrational," and often pits it against the rational part of the psyche placed at the top of the hierarchy (see Plato's *Republic*, 1941, Chapter 13). According to Plato, the conflict among the three parts of the psyche causes disharmony, which he very nearly equates with evil. He considers harmony to be the hallmark of health and well-being—and even of truth, goodness, and beauty—and harmony is considered attainable only through the exercise of reason. Plato's negative views of human appetite and pleasure seeking have become a pervasive and persistent aspect of the Hellenic legacy. These views are matched by an equally negative view of passion in the Christian legacy as represented by St. Augustine (although he did not share the Hellenic glorification of reason). From the Augustinian point of view, passion is bad not so much because it sways us from truth and causes inner disharmony as Plato suggested, but because it leads to *sin*. In the East, by and large, the negativity of pleasure seeking follows not so much from its alleged contributions to sinfulness, but from the insatiable nature of desire and from the consequent suffering.

Modern psychology shares this Western legacy in various ways. In contemporary psychology, barring few exceptions, emotion continues to be viewed as a generally negative influence on cognition. In the Freudian model, the id, the pleasure-seeking part of the tripartite psyche, is perpetually involved in conflict with the thinking and conscious ego as well as the conscientious superego. The Freudian model of the tripartite psyche bears an uncanny similarity with Plato's model, although the id, ego, and the superego are not exactly parallel to Plato's appetitive, spirited, and rational parts of the psyche. Freud was perhaps as obsessed with the importance of pleasure seeking as was St. Augustine, although their views of the role of religion in this context were diametrically opposed. While for St. Augustine passions lead humanity to sin and religion to salvation, for Freud (1930/1961) religion is the primary cause of the repression of passion and of the resulting discontent of modern civilization.

Another persistent theme of the Western tradition is the division between soul and the body and the view that body is the seat of passions. This soul–body dualism may be traced back to its Hellenic roots in the ideas of Pythagoras, and also to the Christian tradition from St. Augustine to Descartes. In ancient Greece, Plato (1941, p. 305) viewed the psyche as closer to truth and reality than the body. By contrast, Aristotle avoided sharply dividing the mind from the body by suggesting that beliefs, bodily motions, and physiological changes are inseparable components of emotion.[1] For Descartes, who sharply separated the soul from the

body, passions posed a special problem. On the one hand, he thought that passions clearly involve agitation of the body, and yet on the other hand, they seem to be inseparable from purely mental phenomena such as perceptions, desires, and beliefs. This Cartesian dilemma continues to plague contemporary Western approaches to emotion. At one end of the psychophysicalist divide, Carl Hempel (1935/1949) takes a strictly physicalist position and insists that statements of mental events such as "I have a toothache" are meaningful only to the extent to which they are reducible to (or translated as) statements of publicly observable bodily conditions such as decayed tissue in the tooth. At the other end of the spectrum, Jean-Paul Sartre (1939/1984, p. 246) insists that emotion is ineluctably a *fact of consciousness*. Sartre gives a simple example to illustrate his point. A person may feel that the grapes up on the vine are highly appetizing, but, on finding them hard to reach, may decide that they are "too green." In such a situation, Sartre suggests, the sour taste of the grapes is not conferred chemically, but by "acting disgusted."[2]

Parallel to the differences in the views of emotions as physical versus mental events is the distinction between objective versus subjective approaches to emotion. While the objective aspects of emotion, such as bodily changes, are open to objective observation and physicochemical intervention, the subjective aspects are open only to verbal description, interpretive analysis, and to communicative intervention. The physicalist and mentalist views of emotion are thus paralleled by the matchingly different empirical and hermeneutic epistemologies. In the West, the physicalist view of emotions was buttressed by the naturalistic perspective advanced by Charles Darwin and his followers, among others.

The Naturalistic Approaches to Emotion

It is widely—almost universally—accepted that humans are like many other species of animals in their emotional reactions to the sight of food, members of the opposite sex, danger, sudden changes in the environment, and so on. Charles Darwin provided a solid theoretical framework for the comparison of emotional expression of humans and other animals. A few years after publishing the *Origin of Species*, Darwin (1872/1965) published *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*. In it he gave a detailed and systematic account of the similarities between human and animal expressions of emotion and provided a natural scientific explanation of human emotions in that context. His main point was that several aspects of the expressions of emotion, such as the showing of teeth in anger, have functional value in the adaptation and survival of animals. Although grinding one's teeth in anger may not have survival value among humans any more, such expressions may be understood as a vestige of the evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens*. By providing a biological account of emotional expression, Darwin pioneered the natural science approach to the study of emotions.

In his attempt to present a natural science approach to psychology, William James (1884, 1890/1983) proposed a psychophysiological account of emotions. While emphasizing the role of physiological factors such as increased rate of breathing or heartbeat and other visceral changes, James suggested that such changes precede, rather than succeed, the conscious awareness of an exciting fact, such as the sight of an attacking animal. To put it in his oft-quoted words, "we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike" (1890/1983, p. 1066), and not vice versa. James's view, often known as the James–Lange theory (after its cocontributers), emphasizes the primacy of bodily changes over the experience or cognition of emotion both in chronological order as well as in relative importance. Within decades after James's pioneering work, the physiologist Walter Cannon (1915/1929) tried to show that visceral organs do not play a crucial role in emotions, as suggested by James. In his experiments, cats showed typical reactions of anger and fear even after their visceral organs such as the heart, lungs, stomach, liver, and others were surgically removed. Cannon held that the seat of emotion was the central nervous system, especially the hypothalamus, and not the visceral organs. Regardless of this shift in the locus, Cannon's theory, like James's, hinges on the bodily reactions built into the physiological makeup of organisms that are triggered by stimuli to which the organisms have been sensitized during the course of evolution.

Over the past few decades, the naturalistic approach has been advanced in the form of various allied perspectives within the natural science paradigm: psychoevolutionary (Plutchik, 1970, 1977), electrophysiological (Delgado, 1973), neuroendocrinal (Henry, 1986), and so on. Numerous studies have tried to specify the physiological, chemical, or electrical correlates of various emotions, and several surveys of such studies have been available in specialty books (e.g., Leshner, 1977) and textbooks (e.g., Carlson & Hatfield, 1992, Ch. 4) on emotion. Recently, Carl Ratner (1989) reviewed and critiqued the naturalistic theories of emotion. As noted by him, and rightly so in my opinion, the naturalistic approaches generally stress the universality of emotional reactions within and across species; assume the primacy of emotion over cognition; and try to reduce at least the naturally given and widely shared "basic" emotions to specific neurophysiological or chemical conditions. These features of the naturalistic approach militate against the claims to cross-cultural variation in the experience of emotion and of cognitive control over emotions claimed by cultural and cognitive constructionist theories of emotion.

Here, as in many controversial issues, the truth may lie in the middle. On the one hand, it makes sense to agree with the naturalists in at least one respect: that we must recognize that there is a standard neurophysiological infrastructure that provides all humans with the basic capacities essential for experiencing emotions. On the other hand, the naturalists' assumption that each basic emotion involves a specific chemical or neuroelectrical condition is not supported by studies. For

instance, on the basis of his survey of a large number of studies, Leshner (1977) concludes that "James's position that discrete physiological states evoke discrete emotions is not supported" (p. 121). Schacter and Singer's (1962) classic studies are instructive in this instance. They injected their experimental subjects with specific amounts of epinephrine, a chemical known to induce palpitation, tremor, face flushing, and other such physiological conditions commonly observed in emotional arousal. Schacter and Singer then exposed their subjects to differing experimental conditions: a confederate acting silly in the "euphoria" condition versus a confederate complaining about having to write embarrassing questionnaires in the "anger" condition. They found that subjects reported their feelings of "joy" or "fury" appropriate to the *context* to which they were exposed. Although Schacter and Singer's research has been criticized strongly on both methodological and theoretical grounds (Plutchik & Ax, 1967; Maslach, 1979), nevertheless it has shown that social and cognitive factors play a key role in the subjective experience of emotion regardless of common underlying physical conditions.

The relative importance of physiological conditions versus cognitive factors is an issue of continuing debate. Without trying to foreclose that debate, some observations may be made at this juncture. As noted by Ratner (1989), although biology provides the "potentiating substratum for emotions" (p. 227), "nothing in our nature tells us *that* we will, *when* we will, or *how* we will experience these emotions" (p. 226; emphasis added). He suggests that "[i]n becoming uncoupled from natural stimuli and responses and in becoming associated with socially specified stimuli and responses ... the natural basis of infantile 'emotions' is jettisoned and an entirely new basis is constituted" (p. 226). As we shall see, the Indian estheticists also have noted an "uncoupling" of human emotions from their natural bodily correlates, although their views are based on entirely different premises and have radically different outcomes. Also, the constructivist views of emotion are more compatible with the cognitivist implications of Vedānta, which makes it particularly relevant to discuss them here. I shall conclude the discussion of naturalistic approaches to emotion on this note, and turn to the cognitive constructivist and cultural constructionist approaches to emotion.

The Cognitive, Social, and Cultural Construction of Emotions

The relationship between cognition and affect has been a matter of continuing debate over the past several years. On one side of this debate, Robert Zajonc (1980, 1984) insists that cognition and emotion are two different domains, and that the latter has primacy over the former. Prominent on the other side of the debate is Richard Lazarus (1984), who claims the primacy of cognition over emotion. To me such a debate seems singularly sterile and counterproductive, regardless of whether primacy of either is claimed in terms of their relative importance, causal efficacy, or temporal precedence. In my view, cognition, affect, and conation are

convenient fictions that help make sense of the complex construct of personhood, rather than separate "real" entities or ontological categories. The trilogy of mind may be seen as three complementary aspects in terms of which constructs such as "mind" and "personhood" are understood. Like the three "strands" (*guṇas*) of *Prakṛti* or the phenomenal world as conceptualized in the Sāṅkhya system, they may be viewed as continually "interacting" in the sense that in situations where one seems to dominate the others typically recede, but none is completely eliminated or totally absent at any time. It is interesting that, regardless of their differences over the primacy of either affect or cognition, both Zajonc and Lazarus imply that both are present in human experience and behavior at all times. For instance, following Inhelder and Piaget, Zajonc (1980) says that "[w]hile feeling and thoughts both involve energy and information, the first class of experiences is heavier on energy, whereas the second is heavier on information" (p. 154). This may be translated in Sāṅkhya terms to mean that *sattva guṇa* predominates in cognition while the *rajas* predominates in emotion. Lazarus (1991) speaks in the same vein when he approvingly refers to John Gerson, a medieval writer, who reportedly argued that "there is no cognition that is not also affection, and no affection that does not include cognition; both are interdependent and operate together" (p. 130).

Given the constant and inevitable overlap between cognition and emotion, it is hardly a surprise that several contemporary authors provide cognitive formulations of emotion. Lazarus (1991, p. 129) lists over 20 of them. Of these, Arnold (1960), Averill (1980), de Sousa (1980), and Mandler (1984) may be mentioned as prominent ones. Here, I wish to refer to selected ideas of Averill insofar as he explicitly provides a cognitive constructivist and social constructionist view of emotion, which would help connect with the constructionist theme stressed elsewhere in this volume. Averill (1980) explains his constructionist view of emotion, as follows:

> First, it means that the emotions are social *constructions*, not biological givens. Second, it means that the emotions are *improvisations*, based on an individual's interpretation of the situation.... [T]he emotions are viewed here as transitory social roles, or socially constituted syndromes. The social norms that help constitute these syndromes are represented psychologically as cognitive structures or schemata. These structures—like the grammar of a language—provide the basis for appraisal of stimuli, the organization of responses, and the monitoring of behavior, that is, for the improvisation of emotional roles. (p. 306; emphasis original)

It is important to note here that according to this view, emotions are neither simply a physicochemical condition or a state of activation of the body, nor are they sets of sensory feelings "given in experience." They are mainly construals, meanings, or interpretations that are "added by the mind." Although guided by the cognitive structures and schemata lodged somewhere within the psychological makeup of the person, they are also inextricably embedded in the social context. Averill

(1980) explains that by "syndrome" he means "a set of responses that covary in a *systematic fashion*" (p. 307; emphasis added). I assume that in emphasizing systematic covariation of responses Averill suggests that emotions are part of an *organization* in the society at large where the role relationships are structured, and also within the individual where cognition, affect, and conation are structured. As suggested by Averill in the above quotation, the specific contribution of cognition to emotional experience is the *appraisal* of the social stimuli and responses in the light of social norms appropriate to the situation on hand.

Here, I wish to emphasize that to me it makes good sense to place emotions in the context of social roles as Averill does. Most social roles are structured in pairs: parent–child, husband–wife, master–servant, teacher–student, ruler–citizen, local–stranger, and so on. It is in the *mutuality* of such paired relationships that most of the rights and duties of persons are defined. Rights and duties of persons vis-à-vis alter roles, as well as the broader social norms that ostensibly govern a person's conduct in various situations, differ from culture to culture and within each culture from time to time. Feelings such as guilt, envy, jealousy, pride, and love are invariably shaped by the specific socioculturally defined nature of interpersonal role relationships. Against this background, Theodore Sarbin (1986), a prominent role theorist, has suggested a theory of emotion based on the concept of social roles.

Insofar as they are an integral part of the sociocultural domain, emotions are bound to be relative to culture and era. Although as a biological species humans share standardized capabilities to feel pleasure, fear, attraction, repulsion, disgust, and so on, all such "basic" emotions are nevertheless open to be differently molded within the contexts of intercultural as well as interindividual differences. The derived or "social" emotions such as shame and guilt, or "interpersonal" emotions such as envy and jealousy are particularly open to differential shaping in relation to individual and cultural variation. It should be clear that a young man may be less inhibited in the company of his friends in feeling randy and in expressing such feelings openly than he would be in the company of his parents or superiors. The social norms of a stag party are obviously different from those of a family or church, and the emotional experience and expression must differ accordingly. Then again such norms differ from culture to culture, from one religious group to another. Compare, for instance, the expression of love in art in fresco paintings in a medieval Benedictine abbey to that in the Hindu temples of Khajuraho famous for its erotic sculptures. Or consider the different ways in which divine love may manifest within the same religion: think, for instance, of divine love in viewing God as a stern disciplining father, or in viewing Jesus as an adorable baby born in a manger. In certain sects of devotional Hinduism, divine love is expressed in many varied forms by placing Lord Kṛṣṇa in all conceivable role relationships. We shall turn to this issue in a later section of this chapter.

Thinking of emotion in this manner in the cultural context is radically

different from the conception of emotion in the context of experimental psychology. In Woodworth and Schlosberg's (1954) *Experimental Psychology*, emotion is viewed primarily as a pattern of physiological arousal studied objectively in decontextualized experimental laboratory situations. The implicit ontology of this model is physicalist; its epistemology is operationistic; and its implicit praxis is the prediction and control of animal and human behavior. Compare against this background the following characterization of emotion by Michelle Rosaldo (1984), an anthropologist: "Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood but social practices organized by stories that we enact and tell. They are structured by our forms of understanding" (p. 143). Rosaldo's epistemology is clearly hermeneutic and interpretivist, shaped as it is by authors such as Paul Ricoeur (1970) and Clifford Geertz (1973), who have taken the "interpretive turn" in the philosophy of the social sciences. It is within this pluralist interpretive context—as opposed to the context of positivist universalism—that *ethnotheories* of emotion sensitive to cultural differences are constructed. Catherine Lutz (1987), another anthropologist working within the interpretive framework, put it this way: "Ethnotheories of emotion describe a fundamental and ubiquitous aspect of psycho-social functioning. They are used to explain why, when, and how emotion occurs, and they are embedded in more general theories of the person, internal processes, and social life" (p. 291).

Rom Harré (1986), who strongly advocates a social constructionist view of emotions, rejects the Cartesian ontology, and suggests that emotions occur in the *conversational* reality. The rules of language in "emotion talk" are considered important in understanding emotions. Harré and Gillett (1994) note that "Indo-Europeans seem to have no place for the emotion the Japanese call 'amae,' with a display of which an adult Japanese expresses a kind of child-like emotional dependency that we would treat as a mark of immaturity" (p. 147). The conversational context is placed within an *interpersonal space*, as it were, so emotions need not be located within either the mind or the body. In such formulations, dialogue between persons is often considered the "primary reality," and is thereby granted ontic status. Later on in this chapter, we shall see how in the tradition of devotional religion in India, divine love is thought of as a primary reality, and the feeling of love is construed and ways for its transformation devised within the framework of distinctive ontological doctrines and cultural ideals. Here, let me turn to Max Scheler, who locates emotion in deeper levels of the ego, rather than out in the socially shared interpersonal space.

Max Scheler's Doctrine of the Deeper Levels of Feeling

Max Scheler (1874–1928) was a prominent German philosopher who made important contributions to the study of emotion as well as to phenomenology, sociology of knowledge, and other related fields of study. Although well recog-

nized among philosophers, his contributions to the study of emotion have been largely ignored by Anglo-American psychologists. His ideas deserve special attention in the present work for a variety of reasons: He is one of the rare thinkers who (1) developed his views of emotion in the light of a serious comparative study of Indian and Western thought; (2) focused on the affective aspect of human life as a whole with a particular emphasis on human suffering; (3) systematically examined the relationship between emotions and the ego; and (4) emphasized the role of cognitive appraisal in the experience of emotion with particular reference to religious and spiritual meaning and values. A central theme in Scheler's theory of emotion is the classification of emotions in four levels of the "depth" of personality (Scheler, 1926/1973; 1916/1974).[3] The following is a schematic presentation of Scheler's levels of feelings adapted from Ted Altar (n.d.) (see Table 5.1).

According to Scheler, the first, *sensory* types of feelings are located in specific parts of the body; one knows where the pain is, and what organs of the body it belongs to, and how far it extends. Such feelings are not attached to the ego immediately as are the psychic feelings like sadness and happiness. They are attached to my body, rather than to me, as it were. They do not extend in time; there is no "prefeeling" in anticipation or "postfeeling" that would linger before or after the experience of sensory feelings. Nor are such feelings shared with fellow beings. Sensible feelings are producible by the application of adequate stimuli and are removable by the use of narcotics.

By contrast to the localized sensory feelings, the *vital* feelings such as feeling refreshed, vigorous, or sick, and so on spread vaguely throughout the whole body, and are felt at the body's "particular life center" as it were. According to Scheler, the vital feelings regulate life meaningfully, they have a functional and intentional character, and are disturbed by paying attention to them. Next, he describes the *psychic* feelings as immediately self-relating; they are about some object or other (such as one's home, friends, events) and are related to cognitively perceived values. They belong to the "psychic ego" (presumably as opposed to the bodily

Table 5.1
Scheler's Four Types of Feelings Graded by Increased "Depth" of Feeling

Type of feeling	Examples	Objects of Value
1. Sensory feelings	Pain, tickling, itching, sensual pleasures	Pleasant/unpleasant
2. Vital feelings	Weakness, strength, illness, health, sleepiness, etc.	Noble/base
3. Psychic feelings	Sorrow, joy, sadness, happiness, euphoria, etc.	Just/unjust, beautiful/ugly
4. Spiritual feelings	Blissfulness, despair, peace of mind, etc.	Personal worth, pangs of conscience

ego), and as such are thought of as the "pure feelings of the ego." Unlike sensory pain that may disappear or vital feelings that may be disturbed when one pays attention to them, psychic pain tends to grow when attended to. In Scheler's view, it makes sense to say that at times the psychic feelings are felt to be close to or at a greater distance from the ego. Thus, one could say "I *am* sad," thereby expressing sadness closer to the ego than in saying "I *feel* sad."

Scheler places the purely *spiritual*, *metaphysical*, or *religious* feelings such as happiness, despair, security, pangs of conscience, peace, and the like at the deepest level. They relate to the person as an indivisible whole. According to Scheler, bliss and despair are the correlates of the moral values; they are religious feelings par excellence. They are not subject to arbitrary change; they are unconditioned and unalterable by any acts of will. Nor are they related to special areas of a person's existence, such as his or her society, friends, vocation, and the like. They permeate the entire range of experience and correlate with the moral value of our personal being.

Scheler's approach clearly implies the mind–body distinction; while the first two levels can be easily assigned to the lived experience of the embodied person, the next two can be placed in the psychic, social/conversational, and/or spiritual domains. Insofar as Scheler connects emotions to values, he implies the importance of the role of appraisal within a sociomoral context. In that respect, his approach resembles the cognitive and social constructionist theories of emotion. It stands out as remarkably different from any other commonly known modern Western approach to emotion in emphasizing the role of affect in the "inner" reaches of the ego, and in suggesting a domain of affect beyond intentional states of the mind. As we shall soon see, it is in this regard that Scheler's ideas make a connection with the Indian approaches.

Scheler says little about the removal of human suffering; he does not propose any techniques to help cope with the negative side of emotions. Yet he makes some broad comparisons between typical Western and Indian ways of trying to eliminate suffering. Western ways, Scheler notes, involve eliminating from the world the *external* causes of suffering by such means as technology, hygiene, therapy, organization of the community, and so on. By contrast, the Indian–Buddhist approach, he observes, aims at eliminating such *internal* sources of suffering as the drives and the thirst that reside within the soul (Scheler 1916/1974, p. 145). Scheler asks if the main feature of the Buddhist approach might be thought to be "the *withdrawing of self* from the causal connection of act and existence" (p. 148). Insofar as the Buddha denied the existence of the self, Scheler's conjecture about the nature of the Buddhist technique for the elimination of suffering is somewhat off the mark. Nevertheless, I think he is right in characterizing typical Indian approaches as involving a withdrawal from the external world into the innermost sanctum of the mind. This is at least true of the practice of Yoga, which the Buddha had incorporated in his Eightfold Path. This brings us to the system of Sāṅkhya-

Yoga and its technique of "isolating" the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer from the daily involvement in the affairs of the external world.

The Self as Enjoyer–Sufferer: The Views of Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta

The concern for suffering in human life and the search for ways for its remedy have been central themes of the Indian culture for millennia. These themes parallel the concern for sinfulness of human nature and the striving for redemption that are central to Christianity. The first of the four noble truths of Buddhism is that suffering exists, and another is that suffering originates in self-centered desire. The main objective of Buddhism, then, is to overcome desire and thereby remove suffering. Similarly, the complete annihilation of suffering is the central goal of the Sāṅkhya system, which is one of the oldest systems of Indian thought. Its concepts are traced to pre-Buddhist Upaniṣads such as the *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad. The twin systems of Sāṅkhya and Yoga on the one hand and the various schools of Buddhism on the other are believed to have developed through mutual influence for centuries before the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies were systematized in sets of aphorisms probably around the first couple centuries of the Christian era. Except for the materialist Cārvākas, most systems of Indian thought share the view that human suffering results from the insatiable nature of human desires. This view has deeply shaped typical Indian theories of the affective aspect of human life regardless of differences among them on various matters. Buddhism, for instance, has always denied the existence of the self, while the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta systems have conceived of a Self (*puruṣa*, *ātman*) that lies beyond pleasure and pain. Yet they all share the assumption of the insatiability of desires. It is therefore necessary to examine the notion of the insatiability of desires before examining the Sāṅkhya, Yogic, and Vedāntic views of self and affect.

The Insatiability of Desires and the Resultant Suffering

As noted in Chapter 3, the Vedāntists share the view of the human condition widely held in India that, on the whole, the amount of suffering in life exceeds that of pleasures. The 17th-century saint–poet Tukārām expressed the idea in a single pithy line: "Upon searching one finds but a grain of happiness, and alas, there's a mountain of suffering."[4] The negativity of this assessment resembles the lament of Job in the *Old Testament*, who loses his property, family, and health for apparently no sin on his part: the amount of suffering in life far exceeds that of happiness. However, unlike in the case of Job in the Bible, the predominant issue in the Indian context is not whether humans suffer disproportionately when compared with their wrongdoing and whether God is fair and just in distributing happiness and misery,

but rather, the negative assessment of the balance sheet is based on the specific idea that human expectations always exceed the levels of actual gain, no matter how great the gain or success might be. Throughout the centuries, this idea has been conveyed more often in a tacit way through poems, myths, legends, and so on, than explicitly through theoretical analysis and argument.

The story of King Yayāti in the epic Mahābhārata poignantly illustrates the idea of the insatiability of human desires. Yayāti's desires could not be satisfied despite the help of enormous power, abundant wealth, and beautiful women. Cursed by a man whose wife he desires, Yayāti attained old age too soon, losing his ability to enjoy life. As a result, he begged his grown sons to lend him their youth, so that he would continue enjoying. Obliged by his youngest son, Yayāti continued his pleasure seeking for a long time, but still could not feel contented. Like the billionaire Howard Hughes of our own times, he could not find happiness despite the wealth and the best comforts and beauties that wealth and power could buy. So persistent is the theme of the insatiability of human desires in the Indian culture that the story of Yayāti has inspired novelists to recycle the theme in contemporary literature. Indeed, it is tempting to suggest that a "Yayāti Complex" is as central a feature of the Indian civilization as Freud thought the Oedipus complex was for the whole of humanity. The central idea of the story of Yayāti is beautifully expressed in words attributed to him in a single short stanza of *Ādiparva* (75.49), a section of the epic Mahābhārata. It may be paraphrased in English as follows: "Human desires can never be completely sated by means of objects of pleasure; instead they get stronger like fire flared by fuel." The same idea is repeated in the same words in the *Manu Smṛti* (2.94), an influential code of Hindu ethics (see Manu, 1886/1971, p. 47).

In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, B. G. Tilak (1915/1971) has discussed the idea of the insatiability of desires while comparing typical Indian ideas of happiness and misery with parallel notions in Western thought. While explaining the significance of the story of Yayāti and the theme it represents, Tilak refers to an idea attributed to Schopenhauer, namely that a person is happy to the degree to which his or her expectations are fulfilled. Tilak expresses this idea mathematically as a fraction obtained by dividing the quantity of enjoyment by that of expectations. He adds that the result of this division must always be a fraction of diminishing value, because expectations always tend to grow faster than actual gains. As Tilak points out, there are modern Western parallels to such old Indian ideas. Note, for instance, that William James expressed a similar idea about two decades before Tilak penned his formula. According to James (1890/1983, p. 296), a person's self-esteem may be computed by the formula:

$$\text{Self-esteem} = (\text{Success} \div \text{Pretensions})$$

The same general idea has been followed up in various ways in more recent times. For instance, in their famous studies of the American soldiers in the second World War, S. A. Stouffer and his associates (1949) found that the level of satisfaction among soldiers did not depend so much on their actual gains (e.g., salary, benefits, promotions, working conditions, etc.), as it did on who they compared themselves with and how. Soldiers in various units often compared themselves with groups who, in their eyes, were doing better, and as a result even the most well-paid ones felt dissatisfied with their conditions. Stouffer coined the term *relative deprivation* to describe this phenomenon. The concept of relative deprivation has since been developed into a theory with broad applications in the fields of personality and social psychology (Runciman, 1966).

The concept of relative deprivation implies that whether we *feel* satisfied or dissatisfied depends on our *appraisal* of our own conditions vis-à-vis persons or groups (often called reference groups) with whom we choose to compare ourselves. A parallel theme in social psychology is presented in Leon Festinger's (1954) theory of *social comparison processes*. A common observation in this connection is that people often choose the context of comparison that makes them "feel good" in comparison, so to speak. Yet, paradoxically, the theory of relative deprivation suggests that the opposite is also true in certain conditions. The common Indian take on this paradox is that it is possible to compare "down" as well as "up" on common scales of comparison, but more often than not we tend to compare with those up the ladder. Thus, a person who has no house to live in looks at the one who lives in a hut, who in turn compares him- or herself with the owner of a mansion, the mansion owner wants a bigger and better mansion, or ten or a thousand of them, and so on.

There is an old Indian legend that when Alexander the Great conquered the Punjab province of India, he thought that he had conquered the whole world, and wept for there was no more land left to conquer. Then there is another story that having heard that some great sage lived in the mountains, Alexander ordered his men to go bring the sage to him. Since the sage refused to come, the emperor went to him instead. Exultant in his triumph and glory, Alexander offered to give the sage whatever he wished for. The sage asked for nothing except for the emperor to move away, so that the sage could continue basking in the sun. The fact that the same story is told with a Greek cynic replacing an Indian yogi should not distract us from the point of the story. The point is that such legends convey the value of attaining an inner source of contentment that makes little of the greatest worldly gains.

It is of course possible to criticize this idea by saying that it represents a "sour grapes" attitude toward worldly pleasures and glory. Alternatively, the putative value of the so-called inner contentment might be thought of as "sweet lemons." It is often said that the pitiable economic conditions of contemporary India are the result of an attitude of disdain for worldly glory fostered over centuries by various schools of thought and religious sects. Yet it is also noted, paradoxically, that Hinduism is probably the only religion that flagrantly encourages the worship of the Goddess of Wealth (*Lakṣmī*) and flaunts erotic sculpture in temples. Also, a Hindu apologist might point out that one of the traditional

definitions of *dharma* (sometimes loosely translated as "religion") is "that which helps attain both, worldly prosperity (*abhyudaya*) as well as ultimate good beyond prosperity (*niḥśreyasa*)."[5] It may also be noted that although the ancient Vedic tradition, particularly the Mīmāṁsā school, has emphasized the pursuit of pleasures in the "other world" (*svarga*, or heaven), many other schools have suggested ways of annihilating suffering here and now, not in a possible future world. Indeed, the disdain for otherworldly pleasures is cultivated in the early Upaniṣads. A story from the ancient *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad, narrated in Chapter 2 of this volume, illustrates this point.

Naciketas, it may be recalled, was not satisfied with the promise of all kinds of pleasures on earth and in heaven because they were *impermanent*. The point of the story is that neither pleasures nor suffering last forever; they follow one another in endless cycles as surely as economic upturns and downturns. Similarly, birth follows death, and the cycle of *saṁsāra* perpetuates, with the balance sheet running more in the red than black. It is believed that what keeps the cycle going endlessly is the inevitability of the consequences of action, or karma, whereby no one can escape enjoying or suffering as appropriate. The individual, as an enjoyer–sufferer, is sometimes viewed as a hapless rider tied willy-nilly to a vehicle made of accumulated seeds of past karma that keeps hurtling from past to present to future (Dasgupta, 1924/1973, p. 103). This view of the world stands in sharp contrast with the Western ideal of *progress*, which is often believed to be perpetual and always moving from good to better within the mundane sphere (Bury, 1932/1960). At the cosmological level, the idea of progress is complemented by the notion of time's arrow: the notion that time, like evolution, inevitably moves only from the past to the present to the future (Blum, 1962). At the social level, the counterpart of the idea of progress is to think in terms of utopias. At the individual level, its counterpart is the notion of self-actualization. While Aristotle may be identified as the originator of the concept of self-actualization, implying perpetual progress of the individual, Maslow (1954/1970a) is one of its prominent advocates in contemporary psychology. In the Indian tradition, by contrast, time is viewed as cyclical (Deshpande, 1979). Society is also said to move in cycles, each cycle going into four stages of worsening decay. At the individual level, life is seen as going through a perpetual cycle of birth and death in which suffering exceeds happiness. Nevertheless, the saving grace of such an apparently pessimistic view is that a *permanent* end to suffering is envisaged. The Sāṅkhya is clearly a system that puts the permanent annihilation of suffering as its central goal. That is the system to which we now turn.

The Sāṅkhya View of Suffering and Its Permanent Removal

The *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* is a book of aphorisms composed by Īśvarakṛṣṇa to summarize the principles of the Sāṅkhya system that were passed on to him from

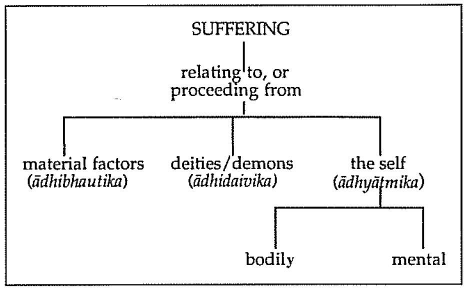

Figure 5.1. The Sāṅkhya view of the three types of suffering.

its originator, Kapila, through a succession of teachers and students.[6] This text begins with a statement to the effect that, insofar as there exists threefold suffering, there is desire to know the means for counteracting it. Figure 5.1 schematically represents the Sāṅkhya conception of the three types of suffering. The first type involves suffering arising from external physical factors, such as other humans, animals, reptiles, and the like. According to Vācaspati Miśra,[7] one of the chief commentators of the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā*, the pain caused by attacking persons, animals, or reptiles can be removed by physical means, such as scaring them by raising a stick, or by counterattacking, and so on. The second type of suffering (*ādhidaivika*) arises from a different type of external factors, such as demons or deities. Such suffering may be averted by wearing amulets or chanting mantras to ward off the demons, or by offering sacrifices to the deities and praying to the gods. We shall ignore here the reference to demons and the shamanist practices to counter them, since it sounds repugnant in the light of the worldview of science, and shall look at the idea of praying to the gods. It appears that prayers to the gods are mentioned simply because it was common among people to use them; in principle, prayers would be irrelevant to the Sāṅkhya system because, unlike the followers of theistic Mīmāṁsā system, they neither believed in gods nor aspired to seek a place in the heaven. From the Sāṅkhya viewpoint, even if prayers were effective, a place in the heaven would be temporary, and hence useless in view of the system's avowed goal of eliminating suffering once and for all. Like Naciketas in the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad mentioned before, the Sāṅkhyas sought a radical and permanent solution to the problem of suffering, and they claim to have found one. The idea of the permanent eradication of suffering would sound quixotic to Western ears, but it would be interesting to examine what it means.

As mentioned above, Scheler had noted that the Buddhist way of dealing with suffering was by altering conditions internal to the person, not by controlling nature or other such external means, which are emphasized in the West. Indeed, the Sāṅkhya system does not aim at killing attacking animals or exorcising haunting demons as a means of eradicating suffering. Its focus is on dealing with suffering of

the third category named above, namely that "pertaining to the self." In his commentary on the Sāṅkhya aphorisms, Vācaspati Miśra clarifies that the suffering "pertaining to the self" arises from two types of *internal* sources: one from the body and the other from the mind. Of these, bodily pain is believed to result from factors such as the imbalance of bodily humors, and could be alleviated by ingesting medicine. By the time Īśvarakṛṣṇa composed the Sāṅkhya aphorisms, Āyurveda, India's indigenous medical system, was already well established. In fact, it even included therapy for psychological problems (Weiss, 1977). But the mental suffering that the Sāṅkhyas sought to remedy was neither of the psychopathological variety, nor of the garden variety, such as that arising from affective reactions like hunger and lust. Instead, their focus was on suffering arising from misconstrued notions of selfhood that are congenital among all mortals, but are removable through the right insight. To understand what that means, it is necessary to look at the basic concepts of the Sāṅkhya system and examine some relevant aspects of their worldview.

The Sāṅkhya system postulates two distinct ontological categories: *Puruṣa*, which is pure consciousness, and *Prakṛti*, which Larson and Bhattacharya (1987, p. 23) have called "primordial materiality." Although conceived as a single category, the term *puruṣa* refers collectively to innumerable distinct centers of awareness, or individual "souls." The fundamental characteristic of *puruṣa* is sentience, or the capacity for experiencing objects and events. In and of themselves, the *puruṣas* do not act; they are passive witnesses to what goes on in the domain of Prakṛti. The very purpose of Prakṛti is said to be to become the object of experience or "enjoyment" (*bhoga*) for the *puruṣas* and thereby bind them within its domain, and to release (*apavarga*) them from its bonds so that they can remain in the state of "isolation" (*kaivalya*). As noted in Chapter 3, Prakṛti is said to be composed of three continually interacting components or "strands" (*guṇas*), namely *sattva* (intelligibility, "enlightenment," or lightness), *rajas* (activity, energy), and *tamas* (inertia, resistance, and darkness). By their very nature, these strands continually supercede one another; one dominates while the others recede, thereby accounting for the constant changes in the domain of mind and matter.

How and why the phenomenal world of Prakṛti keeps changing, or why the passively witnessing *puruṣas* got involved with events in the changing world in the first place, are knotty issues in Sāṅkhya theory (Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 247). It is believed that the normally incessant changes in the domain of Prakṛti are temporarily arrested during the cosmic phase of dissolution (*pralaya*). During this quiescent phase, there is a corresponding cessation of experience of all individual *puruṣas*. But this phase ends in its course, and a new phase of evolution is said to begin. According the Sāṅkhya cosmogony, the first evolute of the contact between *puruṣa* and Prakṛti is called *mahat*, or "intellect" (*buddhi*). This, in turn, gives rise first to egoity (*ahaṁkāra*) in the *puruṣas*, which manifests in a persistent tendency toward self-preservation and self-assertion of individual beings. From egoity evolves mentation (*manas*, or mind), which in turn generates the sensory and motor organs encased in a body. Such is the account of origination of the embodied existence of personhood according to the Sāṅkhya theory. In this state of embodiment, a person is said to be endowed with four pairs of mutually opposing predispositions leading to either merit or demerit, knowledge or ignorance, attachment or detachment, power or impotence.[8]

It should be clear that the Sāṅkhya system conceives of persons as endowed with powers to choose between right and wrong, action and inaction. There is no doubt whatsoever that the basic subject matter of Sāṅkhya is persons as ethically responsible beings. Moreover, in Sāṅkhya, as in Yoga, the events in the universe are assumed to strictly follow the laws of cause and effect and conservation of energy (see Dasgupta, 1922/1975, Vol. 1, pp. 254–255). It is implicit that individuals are "free" to go on either side of the predispositions: right versus wrong, attachment versus detachment. But once the choice is made, the appropriate consequences must follow. Strict lawfulness is supposed to apply in the moral domain as well as the nonmoral; merit and demerit necessarily follow from right or wrong action, respectively. Responsibility for action is assumed to be built in into the cosmic order. By the same token, the three components or "strands" of Prakṛti, which are ingrained in all psychophysical phenomena, interact in a strictly lawful fashion. There are distinct affective qualities associated with the three strands (*guṇas*). When the *sattva* predominates, one feels pleasure; sorrow and depression are experienced when *rajas* and *tamas* are predominant, respectively.

As conceptualized in the Sāṅkhya system, feelings are an integral and indivisible aspect of the three components of Prakṛti, which accounts for psychophysical existence of human beings. Although the Sāṅkhya system distinguishes between suffering at the physical and mental levels, there is neither a dichotomous division between mind and body, nor a problem of interaction between them. As noted by Dasgupta (1922/1975), "Feelings are ... the things-in-themselves, the ultimate substances of which consciousness and gross matter are made up.... [In] Sāṅkhya analysis,... thought and matter are but two different modifications of certain subtle substances ..." (Vol. 1, p. 243). The implication of this view for theorizing about emotions should be clear. From the Sāṅkhya viewpoint, there is no need to quarrel over the role of physical or bodily activation versus mental or cognitive components of emotional experience. Each strand of Prakṛti contributes to the experience and behavior of the person; cognition, affect, and conation result from the combined *interactive* functioning of the three strands. This conception of the interaction and mutual convertibility of the three strands of Prakṛti sharply contrasts with the dichotomous conception of mind and body, which creates the problem of interactionism. Moreover, unlike in the Cartesian scheme where the self, mind, and consciousness are equated in the conception of "l'ame" (soul), in Sāṅkhya, as in Yoga, mental events such as thinking, imagining, and remembering are considered modifications of the "inner instrument" (*antaḥkaraṇa*) composed of the intellect, the ego, and the mind, and not of *puruṣa*, the true Self.

According to Sāṅkhya, *puruṣa* mistakenly identifies itself with the conditions

of the inner instrument, and considers itself happy, sad, depressed, and so on depending on the conditions of the three strands of which the mind and body are composed. As long as that mistaken identification continues, one rides the roller coaster of affect, feeling happy for some time and sorry or depressed later on, and back again, in endless cycles. It is possible, however, for the individual to use the inherent capacity for knowledge or correct discrimination, and to realize that true selfhood involves being the uninvolved witness, as *puruṣa* is in its nascent state. When this insight dawns, *puruṣa* returns to its nascent condition beyond the ever-changing domain of Prakṛti, never again to return to the sorrowful experience of mundane life.

This implies that the end of suffering involves going beyond both pleasure and pain, elation and depression. Such is the ideal state of the "isolation" (*kaivalya*), according to Sāṅkhya. What happens to the person who attains this state? According to *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* (aphorism 67), untouched by sorrow, the person continues to live through the remaining days of the course of the life cycle just as a potter's wheel continues to turn for some time after the goal of making a pot is accomplished. But when the person dies, there is no return once again to the cycle of birth and death; the individual has attained release from *saṁsāra*, the wheel of life and death.

If someone appreciates this Sāṅkhya worldview and wishes to attain its ideal, how should one proceed? The *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* (64) very briefly suggests that one should study the [right] principles, dispel all erroneous notions about selfhood, and rid oneself of egoism. In his commentary on this aphorism, Vācaspati Miśra explains that what one should get rid of is the notion that *I* am the one who *knows* this or *does* that. To put it in the language of Greenwald (1980) mentioned in the previous chapter, one must give up "beneffectance," i.e., the tendency to take credit for success, avoid blame for one's failures, and insist that what I know must be right. This is more easily said than done, and the primary sources of Sāṅkhya do not provide a more elaborate guideline of how to proceed. In this regard, the Yoga system of Patañjali complements the Sāṅkhya system by providing a guideline for the step-by-step application of its principles.

Patañjali's Yoga: On "Isolating" the Self

Patañjali's Yoga is widely recognized as the theistic Sāṅkhya, since it builds on the conceptual framework without changing anything except for the addition of the concept of Īśvara, or "God." Despite its recognition of God, the theism of Yoga hardly prompts worship and other forms of expression of affect as does the theology of Rūpa Gosvāmi and others who will be considered later in this chapter. After all, the God of Patañjali's Yoga (1.24) is not viewed in a personal form, but rather as a special *puruṣa* who is untouched by "afflicted" forms of karma, i.e., by actions that are tainted by emotional involvement (*rāga*, *dveṣa*) that bind him to the

unending chain of actions and their consequences. At any rate, the relevance of Yoga for this chapter is threefold. First, Yoga, like Sāṅkhya, conceives of the Self (*puruṣa*) in terms of a transcendent state that lies beyond pain and pleasure, which makes it relevant to the topic on hand, namely the connection between self and affect. Second, although neither Yoga nor Sāṅkhya provide an elaborate account of various emotions, they nevertheless focus on the affective aspect of life while aiming at the individuals' release from suffering. As I hope to clarify in greater detail in the remainder of this section, the overall strategy of both Sāṅkhya and Yoga is to focus not on the objects of desire, but on the subject who desires them. Third, Yoga explicitly recommends that one should withdraw attention from external objects, systematically dilute the affective bond that ties the self to various objects, and draw attention increasingly inward till one reaches the *puruṣa* at the center of awareness. Let me explain what I mean.

It is important to note at the outset that Patañjali (1.12) clearly identifies two principal means to the Yogic goal of the "isolation" (*kaivalya*) of the Self (*puruṣa*) from its entanglement in the World (*Prakṛti*): first, relentless effort (*abhyāsa*), and second, nonattachment (*vairāgya*). It is my impression that many writings on Yoga do not adequately emphasize the role of detachment in the attainment of this goal. The Sanskrit term *vairāgya* means indifference to worldly objects as opposed to love or hatred for them. To put it in the terminology of Western psychology, what the cultivation of detachment means is the dilution of the *affective* bond that joins the self to objects in the world. What is at stake is the relationship of the person with everything that is loved in self-love, as William James (1890/1983, pp. 302–307) put it. That includes all kinds of things in the physical, social, and psychological domain that "*have the power to produce in a stream of consciousness excitement of a certain peculiar sort*" (p. 304; italics original). In psychoanalytic terminology, the Yogic idea of detachment may be translated as *de*cathexis, insofar as cathexis implies the investment of *affect* or libidinal energy on objects. In the terminology of the self psychology of Kohut (1971) and others, detachment requires major realignment of the self with "selfobjects," i.e., with persons who are so important to us (such as parents, caregivers, closest friends) in providing emotional stability that they almost become parts of ourselves.

In his famous paper on the self, C. H. Cooley (1902/1968) said: "I do not mean that the feeling aspect of the self is necessarily more important than any other, but that it is the immediate and decisive sign and proof of what the 'I' is; there is no appeal from it ..." (p. 87). I think it is in the same spirit that the Yoga system views love and hate (*rāga*, *dveṣa*) as the immediate products of the ego (*asmitā*) born from the unwitting association of self-as-subject (See-er, or *draṣṭā*) with seeing and other proceeses of the mind. Cooley goes on to say that "the feeling itself does not go unaltered" (p. 87), and James (1890/1983) declares that everything that is included in self-love is relatively "transient, liable to be taken up or dropped at will" (p. 307). In my view, the method of self-transformation recommended by

Patañjali's Yoga includes a variety of specific measures to systematically and willfully weaken one's affective ties with the world around. Note, for instance, the various restraints listed in the very first steps in the eight steps to Yoga recommended by Patañjali (see Table 5.2). They require that a person wishing to pursue the path of Yoga refrain from causing injury to anyone and from theft, lust, and avarice. All this means that one learns not to hate anyone or anything and not to yearn for anything. This does not mean necessarily that one must "drop out" from society altogether in order to be able to practice Yoga. It means, nevertheless, that one must learn to be affectively neutral.

Learning to abstain from likable things and activities is certainly not unique to Yoga; monastic practices in all kinds of religious and spiritual disciplines recommend or require abstinence. Moreover, refraining from pleasurable objects and activities at least for some time is useful—even required—in all kinds of pursuits, whether educational, commercial, or military. Consider, for instance, the student, the merchant, or soldier, who must forgo weekend parties and outings in order to pass a test, complete a sale, or win a battle. Moreover, affective neutrality is recommended even for a scientist. The Yogic discipline, however, goes much further than that. It requires the adept to withdraw attention from all intentional objects, loved or hated, strongly or even mildly, and turn inward, focusing attention on its contents. In spirit, this maneuver is similar to St. Augustine's call to look inside the soul where, he claimed, lies the truth. The Yogic strategy follows this inward direction, and asks its followers to reach right down to the very center of awareness. Moreover, according to Yoga, as with Sāṅkhya, what lies at the center is not the center of volition, as Erikson would conceive of it, or a knower or thinker as Kant and James, respectively, thought it; it is, rather, the changeless, purely sentient Self (*puruṣa*). According to Kapila's Sāṅkhya aphorisms (6.6–10), the Self is untouched by pain as well as pleasure (see Garbe, 1884/1987, pp. 270–272). According to Patañjali's Yoga, one emancipates oneself from the recurrent cycles of pleasure and pain when one withdraws attention fully from the world of

TABLE 5.2
The Eight Steps to Yoga Recommended by Patañjali

1.	Restraints (*yama*): abstaining from injury, falsehood, theft, lust, and avarice
2.	Observances (*niyama*): cleanliness, contentment, self-control, study, devotion
3.	Posture (*āsana*): stable and comfortable
4.	Breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*): help stabilize the mind
5.	Withdrawal of the senses from their objects (*pratyāhāra*): "introspection"
6.	Concentration (*dhāraṇā*): pegging the mind to an object
7.	Contemplation (*dhyāna*): slowing and "homogenizing" thoughts
8.	"Altered states of consciousness" (*samādhi*): a series of "altered states"

objects as well as one's ongoing thoughts and discovers the Self as the center of awareness.

THE ADVAITA VEDĀNTIC VIEW OF THE BLISSFUL ĀTMAN

There is an interesting similarity between the increasingly deeper levels of emotion suggested by Scheler and the successive inner layers of personhood or *jīva* as described in the Advaita Vedāntic model (compare Table 5.1 earlier in this chapter with Fig. 3.1 in Chapter 3). The sensory feelings in Scheler's model belong to the outer or bodily layer of the *jīva*, and the vital feelings to the second inner layer of "vital breath" and other bodily functions. The psychic feelings of the third layer in Scheler's model correspond with the "mental" and "cognitive" layers, which are third and fourth layers of the *jīva*, respectively. Further, there is an uncanny resemblance between Scheler and Advaita Vedāntic models in that both place the blissfulness in the deepest layers. But unlike with Scheler, who places blissfulness as well as despair on the same fourth level, the blissfulness of the Ātman described in Advaita Vedānta is not on a par with despair, but at a still "deeper" level close to the center of awareness. Whether Scheler and Advaita Vedāntists count four levels or five is of course not important; theorists are free to construct models with an arbitrarily chosen number of layers. What is important is that Scheler and Advaita Vedānta assign different meaning to terms such as blissfulness. For Scheler, bliss seems to mean a highly affective state placed at the positive pole of the continuum, while suffering is placed at the opposite pole. By contrast, the Advaita Vedāntic term *ānanda*, which is usually translated as bliss, suggests a highly valued experience without implying a positive affect as opposed to a negative one. In Advaita Vedānta, the goal is to reach out to a zone beyond the dialectics of pleasure versus pain, happiness versus suffering.

In Sāṅkhya and Yoga, the end of suffering is said to occur when a person withdraws attention from the object pole of intentional consciousness into the subject pole and experiences a nonintentional state of consciousness. Advaita Vedānta is like Sāṅkhya Yoga in accepting the bipolarity of the ordinary states of consciousness and in aiming to withdraw attention from the object pole to the subject pole. However, there is some difference between the Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedāntic views of the self and of self-realization. While both Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedānta claim the Self to be beyond pleasure and pain, the Advaita Vedāntists view it as blissful in nature. However, in the *Sāṅkhya Sūtra* (5.66), Kapila says that the Upaniṣadic account of blissfulness (*ānanda*) is merely figurative (see Garbe, 1884/1987). The cessation of pain in self-realization is nevertheless highly valued in Sāṅkhya, since in ordinary experience pleasure is believed to be tinged by previous, concomitant, or later pain. It may be recalled that, as noted in Chapter 2, the Upaniṣads describe the blissfulness of the Ātman–Brahman as 100 quintillion times higher than the highest joy of a well-endowed human being. Yet Sāṅkhya, a

rigorous nondualist, is known to downplay such glowing accounts of the hallowed state, since the Self is understood to be completely beyond pleasure and pain; it cannot be characterized in either positive or negative terms.

Regardless of such differences, the Sāṅkhya Yoga, as well as Advaita Vedāntic systems, consider the ego (*asmitā*, *ahaṁkāra*) rather than the Self to be the seat of pleasure and pain. The Advaita Vedāntic system equates the enjoyer–sufferer with the self-as-knower and self-as-agent. The basic argument is that it is only the ego equipped with cognitive capacities that can *know* the difference between pleasure and pain and *do* something to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, are all matters of cognitive construction, and so is the ego, which is usually mistaken for the true Self. As noted in the previous chapter, if one performs meditation as prescribed by Advaita Vedānta, the ego is cognitively deconstructed. When it is realized that the true Self is *not* the creature that believed itself to be a knower and agent, there is no one left to do something, know whether the results are good or bad, and thereby feel pleasure or pain. So, according to Advaita Vedānta, a successful program of meditation dissolves the ego, and thus transcends both pleasure and pain.

As noted recently by Sudhir Kakar (1991, p. 7), Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836–1886), the famous saint of Calcutta, often used to repeat the metaphor of the salt doll immersed in the ocean to convey the notion of the dissolution of the ego. Kakar suggests that Ramakrishna's biographer Romain Rolland described the experience following the dissolution of the ego as the "oceanic feeling" for its lack of perceptible limits. Kakar also suggests that Freud picked up this expression from Rolland's letter to him. At any rate, some critics of this Advaitic notion of the "dissolution of the ego" find the result rather unattractive. What is the point in getting dissolved into an insipid condition that takes away pleasure along with pain and suffering? Several Indian thinkers who prefer the path of devotion over the Advaita Vedāntists' path of knowledge take a radically different approach to the conceptualization of the nature of emotion. Not only do they turn to the dramaturgical model, which inquired deeply into the causes of emotions, but they also aim at the perpetuation of a sense of selfhood so as to become immersed in the blissful love for God. In the remainder of the chapter, I wish to discuss first the dramaturgical approach to the study of emotion and the path of devotion, which constructs a theory of self and affect based on the dramatical model.

Emotion According to the Dramaturgical and Aesthetic Theories of India

In the Indian tradition, major contributions to the study of emotion came from aesthetics. What makes it particularly relevant to psychology is the discussion of various "causes" of emotion as portrayed in drama. Another common theme that

allows meaningful comparison of Indian thought with modern psychology is an issue they faced in common, namely, the controlling of emotions, either to minimize their negative impact or to maximize their positive contribution to life. The following discussion emphasizes these points in selectively summarizing the relevant aspects of the vast literature on Indian and comparative dramatics and aesthetics.

Emotion and the Experience of Art

A systematic analysis of the nature of emotion is found in an ancient Sanskrit text, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, meaning the science of dramatics. It was composed by Bharata (often called Bharatamuni) sometime between 5th century before the beginning of the Common Era and the first two centuries after it. This work is widely known through an important commentary, the *Abhinavabhāratī* by Abhinvagupta (ca. 990–1020) (see Bharatamuni, 1926/1956). The central concept in this approach is *rasa*, which means "aesthetic relish," or the relishable quality inherent in a work of art. In India, as in the West, it has been commonly assumed that every work of art—a play, dance, novel, or a poem—communicates a distinctive emotional flavor or mood, such as the erotic, comic, tragic, and so on (Chari 1990). Bharata suggests a list of eight major aesthetic moods or *rasas* and names eight common human emotions or *bhāvas* to which they correspond.[9] The two lists are given in Table 5.3. The eight emotions mentioned in Table 5.3 are considered major in the sense that, in comparison to other emotions such as envy or shame, these are believed to occur, like the "fundamental" emotions mentioned earlier, in all humans as well as animals. In the traditional Indian approaches, it is generally believed that they tend to appear repeatedly, last longer, and dominate the "minor" emotions if they were to appear in experience at the same time.

Table 5.3
The Eight Aesthetic Moods and Corresponding Durable Emotions According to Bharata

Major aesthetic moods (*rasas*)	Major (durable) emotions (*bhāvas*)
Love (*śṛṅgāra*)	Erotic feeling (*rati*)
The comic (*hāsya*)	Mirth (*hāsa*)
Pathos (*karuṇa*)	Sorrow (*śoka*)
The furious (*raudra*)	Anger (*krodha*)
The heroic (*vīra*)	Energy/mastery (*utsāha*)
Horror (*bhayānaka*)	Fear (*bhaya*)
The odious (*bībhatsa*)	Disgust (*jugupsā*)
The marvelous (*adbhuta*)	Astonishment (*vismaya*)

In addition to the eight major emotions, Bharata accounts for 33 minor or relatively transient (*vyabhicāri*) emotions: repose or withdrawal (*nirveda*), debility or weakness (*glāni*), doubt or apprehensiveness (*śaṅkā*), jealousy (*asūyā*), intoxication or pride (*mada*), weariness (*śrama*), indolence (*ālasya*), depression (*dainya*), anxiety (*cintā*), infatuation (*moha*), recollecting or turning things over in the mind (*smṛti*), contentment (*dhṛti*), shame (*vrīḍā*), impulsiveness (*capalatā*), joy (*harṣa*), agitation (*āvega*), stupor (*jaḍatā*), pride or arrogance (*garva*), despair (*viṣāda*), eagerness (*autsukya*), drowsiness (*nidrā*), convulsions (*apasmāra*), sleepiness (*supta*), awakening (*vibodha*), indignation (*amarṣa*), dissimulation or hiding under false appearance (*avahittha*), ferocity (*ugratā*), thoughtfulness (*mati*), sickness (*vyādhi*), insanity (*unmāda*), the "dying" experience (*maraṇa*), fright (*trāsa*), and hesitation (*vitarka*).[10]

A cursory look at these lists would indicate that Bharata tried to be systematic, analytical, and comprehensive in his approach, in a manner similar to the spirit of science. We may not agree with Bharata on how many emotions there are, or which of them are "basic," or which ones may be considered major or minor, and on what grounds. But then, modern psychologists do not tend to agree on such issues either. As a recent textbook of the psychology of emotions (Carlson & Hatfield, 1992, pp. 12–13) points out, the behaviorist J. B. Watson (1924/1970) thought of three basic (i.e., nuclear, inborn) emotions, namely fear, rage, and love (pp. 152–155); Paul Ekman (1980) contends that there are six, namely happiness, disgust, surprise, sadness, anger, and fear (p. 138); and Robert Plutchik (1980) lists eight "primary" emotions: joy, sadness, anticipation, surprise, anger, fear, acceptance, and disgust (p. 134). It is clear that despite lack of unanimity among them, there is a significant overlap between Bharata's account with these recent accounts.

Some of the items on Bharata's longer list would seem odd to us; one would be at a loss to understand why, for instance, sickness or insanity should be called an "emotion." The apparent oddity of some of the ancient labels stems from the difficulties in translation. Nevertheless, given the centuries and continents that separate Bharata from contemporary Western psychologists, the degree of overlap in their accounts of at least the basic emotions is remarkable. It is common among modern psychologists to characterize some emotions as relatively more important than others by designating the former as "elementary," "primary," "basic," or "fundamental." A parallel distinction made by Bharata was based on the assumption that the more fundamental emotions were lasting (*sthāyi*), unlike others considered to be relatively short-lived or transitory emotions (*vyabhicāri bhāva*). Bharata's writings do not present any quantitative data, but the fact that he used a quantifiable criterion like durability as a primary criterion of importance indicates his inclination toward precision.

As an analyst of drama, Bharata thought that only the durable emotions could be effectively translated into aesthetic moods. The transitory emotions can only be accessories that help embellish the central aesthetic mood of a drama; he believed that no effective work of art could be based on jealousy, shame, or anxiety or other "transitory" emotions as its central theme. In a long tradition of scholars who commented on, critiqued, and enriched Bharata's analysis through their own contributions, other reasons were suggested for making a distinction between the stable and transitory emotions. Abhinavagupta's commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (which was mentioned earlier) follows an earlier (9th century) commentator called Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa in suggesting that the stable emotions arise from basic "drives" (*vāsanā*) that manifest in all humans as well as animals. It is noted, for instance, that in humans as well as in animals, erotic feelings are aroused by a variety of sexual stimuli, and that fear is caused by the sight of ferocious predatory animals. Many Indian approaches to emotion are similar to modern psychology in recognizing the basically animal nature of human beings, but differ in emphasizing the distinctly human features: cognitive, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual.

The Causes and Expression of Emotion

The concept of *vāsanā* alludes to what we may call a "biological" explanation. It is important to remember that Bharata's primary interest was in the analysis of drama. In the rich tradition inspired by him, the focus has been primarily on analyzing the nature of aesthetic experience and on instructing playwrights and actors. As such, there was no emphasis on identifying causes, as in scientific studies. Nevertheless, Bharata discusses the causes of emotions to help explain how to effectively portray emotions in a dramatic production. He points out, for instance, that a dramatist can effectively portray the aesthetic mood of love by showing the presence of an objective cause (*ālambana-vibhāva*) of erotic feelings, such as a member of the opposite sex (Romeo for Juliet, and vice versa), as well as contributing or exciting causes (*uddīpana-vibhāva*), such as privacy, quiet, a gardenlike setting, a crescent moon in the sky. While the situation created on the stage is thus suggestive of objective and contributing causes, the actions of the actors represent the overt or externally observable expressions of emotions (*anubhāva*): ogling and looking meaningfully at each other, signs of blushing on the young woman's face, the couple's postures and movements toward each other, soft tone of their speech, and so on. In addition, the characters might express certain ancillary emotions through their appropriate external manifestations: bashfulness expressed by unsuccessful attempts to hide overt signs of arousal, feeling of joy expressed in appropriate words, movements and postures, and so on.

In the seventh chapter of his *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Bharata provides a detailed account of the objective and contributing causes as well as overt expressions (*anubhāvas*) of each of the durable as well as transitory emotions in his list. He distinguishes three types of expressions: verbal, physical (shrugs, glances, knitting the eyebrows and the like), and physiological. The third, physiological type of expressions (called *sāttvika bhāvas*) are in turn divided into the following eight

categories: stiffness the body, perspiration, bristling of hairs on the head or other parts of the body, voice-breaking, trembling, changing skin color, shedding tears, and fainting. Bharata is careful in noting that visible expressions of emotion are partly determined by human nature (*loka svabhāva saṁsiddha*) and partly guided by social customs (*lokayātrānugāmin*). He suggests that acting on the stage is and should be guided by our understanding of both human nature and social customs. To help get a sense of Bharata's analysis, let us examine his account of one of the emotions: Shame, he suggests, is caused by doing things that are considered inappropriate, such as disobeying elders, transgression of normal expectations, or nonfulfillment of one's promise. It should be expressed by hiding one's face, looking down rather than facing up, drawing lines or doodling, playing with one's ring or dress, biting nails, and the like. Actors and dancers in India continue to be guided by Bharata's instructions to this day.

The Relationship between the Experience of Emotion and Its Physical Correlates

A skilled actor can often use the proper intonation, physical movements, and gestures to correctly portray intended emotions. Could an actor also reproduce at will physiological reactions like shedding tears in expressing grief or having gooseflesh while portraying fright? Yes, says Abhinavagupta, provided the actors concentrate fully and become one with the feeling that they are supposed to be experiencing at a given time. This implies the assumption that many physiological processes can be voluntarily induced through concentration, which in turn implies the mind's ability to control the body. The idea that body and mind can be controlled through concentration is central to the psychological principles outlined by Patañjali's Yoga. Several medieval commentators of Bharata, such as Abhinavagupta, explicitly followed the Sāṅkhya Yoga system of philosophy and psychology. Thus, Abhinavagupta characterizes emotions clearly as primarily mental states (*citta vṛttis*) using Yogic terminology. As noted, the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems do not make a dichotomous division between mind and body in a Cartesian fashion. Instead, mental and physical events are seen in a continuum involving the mutual interaction of the three "strands" of Prakṛti mentioned earlier. Thus, Abhinavagupta considers the feelings of weariness, drowsiness, or stupor as predominantly physical states with a small amount of mental component without having to consider them *either* mental *or* physical.

Is there a necessary relationship between a given type of emotion and specific physical and physiological states? The *rasa* theorists deny a one-to-one relationship between mental and physical states on two different grounds. First, as a general principle, they explicitly recognize that, although particular conditions are commonly known to result from particular causes, in some instances the same conditions result from other causes as well. Second, in relation to emotion, they

note that the same physical and physiological responses often accompany different types of emotions. For instance, one's body might move away because of either fear or disgust, and one might shed tears of joy as well as sorrow. This observation is consistent with Walter Cannon's (1915/1929, p. 351) claim that the same visceral changes occur in very different emotional states and in nonemotional states, and Schacter and Singer's (1962) observation (noted earlier) that experimental subjects injected with identical chemicals perceive their states differently in differing situations.

Regardless of the loose relationship between cause and effect in relation to emotion, understanding of the common causes of various emotions is considered important for dramatics. Indeed, in drama, there are no real emotions resulting from real causes. Śaṅkuka (9th century), one of the important commentators of Bharata's work, notes the artificiality of the dramatic situation. Obviously, an actor playing a lovelorn Duṣyanta, or a Romeo, is not in fact smitten by the actress who plays his paramour, nor does he actually experience the emotion he tries to portray. Even if the actress playing Juliet were so good that her cheek actually turn pink on stage, most spectators are aware that such signs of love are just as fake as the crescent moon appearing in the background. But they infer that Romeo and Juliet must have experienced love since they know the conditions under which such feelings are ordinarily obtained. *Rasa* theorists were well aware of the importance of inference in the experience of aesthetic feelings. Thus, according to Śaṅkuka, what matters is neither the artificiality of the dramatic situation nor that spectators infer the existence of emotions, but that a corresponding aesthetic feeling is actually experienced by the spectators.

The Generalization of Emotions in Aesthetic Experience[11]

An interesting aspect of the experience of works of art is that they convey certain emotions to innumerable persons of differing backgrounds. But whose emotions are they? At first blush it appears that in the case of a drama, it conveys the emotions of a character, mainly of the dominant mood of the hero of the play—Prince Rāma's grief upon abduction of his wife Sītā, for instance. In fact, Lollaṭa (9th century), one of the earliest commentators of Bharata, suggested that it is the intense emotions of the main character such as Rāma that a drama conveys. These may be perceived as resulting from objective causes (missing wife), intensified by contributing factors (helplessness while in exile), expressed through overt actions (roaming everywhere in search), and further intensified by secondary emotions (guilt from being unable to protect her, etc.). This analysis by Lollaṭa invoked strong criticisms and long arguments among a chain of scholars over the centuries. The resulting controversy is highly instructive, since it throws light on the nature of aesthetic emotion, brings out some of the most distinctive features of Indian thought, and also brings out the social or interpersonal locus of emotions stressed

by contemporary social constructionist theories of emotion. As such, I shall briefly review its main arguments.

Śaṅkuka pointed out that the original character portrayed in a drama is never present on stage. So there is no question of his or her feelings as such being involved in creating an aesthetic mood. (Moreover, the feelings portrayed may be that of an animal, such as the fright of a fawn, or of a purely fictitious character.) What generates the aesthetic mood, he suggests, is the expression of feelings by an actor. The actor's actions convey an intended emotion in the same way that strokes of a paintbrush imitating the contours of a horse correctly convey the idea of a horse. A later scholar, Bhaṭṭa Tauta, criticized this view by pointing out that an actor normally does not actually have feelings that he or she tries to convey. How could a well-fed actor demonstrate the pangs of hunger if he does not feel them at the time of acting and has never felt them in his entire life? Also, it is impossible that the actor imitates the character, since in most cases, the actors have had no opportunity to meet the historical (or imaginary) characters they are playing. Further, since the feelings of the character are not directly observable by anyone, how could they be imitated by any actor? Granted that an actress can imitate the observable behaviors accompanying certain emotions that she has herself experienced or witnessed in others, these could not be an imitation of the original character, but only of some typical person (of similar sex, age, and status when compared with the character) experiencing the emotion to be portrayed. Even then, the imitation of specific behaviors could hardly convey a specific intended emotion, since specific behaviors are common to different feelings (shedding tears is common to sorrow as well as joy), and the same activities could be interpreted to mean very different behaviors. For instance, an actor drinking from a glass could be perceived as drinking milk or liquor, which has totally different meanings. In other words, according to Śaṅkuka, actors and their emotions or actions could hardly be the proper locus of aesthetic feelings conveyed to the audience.

Bhaṭṭanāyaka (9th–10th century) examined a third alternative—namely, that the locus of feeling in aesthetic experience is the spectator him- or herself—and ruled against it. His line of argument was roughly as follows: Imagine a situation where a spectator is watching a tragedy, like Rāma grieving over the abduction of his wife Sītā. The spectators' experience of pathos could not be their own, for why should the loss of Sītā cause grief in their minds? Who is she to them? If one were to argue that the portrayal of a missing spouse reminds the spectator of their own spouses, this does not make sense. For the spectators might be husband and wife sitting next to each other to watch the play, which makes grieving over a missing spouse totally irrelevant or contradictory to their experience at the time of viewing. Moreover, it makes no sense to assume that spectators witnessing a tragedy experience the sorrow it evokes as their own sorrow. Why would people want to make themselves miserable—and even to *pay* for a painful experience? Yet, it is commonplace that people do not watch only comedies; tragedies seem just

as popular—and as expensive—as comedies. Spectators could hardly be expected to keep watching tragedies if they were to leave the theatre and continue to feel the tragedy as if it were their own.

The upshot of the above arguments is that aesthetic experience cannot be reasonably assumed to be the experience of either the character, or the actor, or the spectator. Then whose emotions are conveyed in drama anyway? As a way out of this dilemma, Bhaṭṭanāyaka suggested that what is shared widely in response to a work of art is not the feeling of any particular person, but rather a *generalized* feeling. According to his theory, there are two factors essential for the experience of aesthetic feelings. The first factor involves the process of generalization (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*) of feelings. In poetry and other audible forms of art it occurs because of the power of words to communicate primary meanings based on their established usage (*abhidhā*) and secondary meanings through metaphor and other figures of speech (*alaṁkāra*). In visual forms of art, generalization of feelings is made possible because of the power of acting (gestures, intonation, shedding tears, and the like) and the portrayal of the common causal factors that are widely believed to lead to the basic emotions. The second factor involves the psychological process of delectation (*bhojakatva vyāpāra*) occurring in the minds of the audience or spectators. This process is comparable to the tasting of delectable food, which we tend to "chew" (*carvaṇa*, or sipping slowly as in wine tasting) while enjoying its taste. In the delectation of a work of art we "enjoy" not only love and laughter but also sorrow, fear, and even disgust, just as we enjoy the tart and bitter tastes along with the sweet while tasting a gourmet recipe.

Abhinavagupta (10th–11th century) advanced and deepened the theory of *rasa* on the theoretical foundations laid down by his predecessors named above. First of all, he makes a clear distinction between the basic emotions (*bhāvas*) experienced in daily life by all of us, from the aesthetic relish (*rasas*) enjoyed while witnessing (or "chewing" and relishing) a work of art. Emotions are the experiences of particular individuals resulting from particular causes. By contrast, moods evoked by works of art are not the emotions of particular persons, as we just saw. They do not belong specifically to the author, the character, the actor, or the spectators. Moreover, they are not perceived as the emotions of a friend, or an enemy, or even a neutral third party. Shorn of all connections with particular persons, the emotion expressed in art is detached from the context of time and place, and thus is truly generalized.

The manifest artificiality of drama and other works of art is an important aid to the process of generalization. The costumes of the actor show that he or she are not their usual selves in their daily lives; artifacts such as the crown on the actor's head indicates that he is playing a king's role today. We also know that the king being portrayed on the stage is in fact dead; the person wearing a crown just could not be the king he is pretending to be. The beautiful maid who appears to respond to the king's advances is also recognized as an actress posturing to be in a romantic

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mood. The garden and the crescent moon are recognized as fakes, no matter how realistic the props might be. Thus, conditions that look like causal conditions appropriate to produce romantic feelings do not produce real feelings in the spectator.

However, given the willing suspension of the artificiality on part of the spectators, the portrayal of basic emotions like fear or disgust usually evokes matching responses among normal spectators. This is because, first, the script of the play has words with evocative power that arouses appropriate meanings in the spectator's mind. Whether in the form of play, poetry, or other forms of literature, words have a symbolic power to communicate meanings. A mere description of the "causes" of emotion can convey the intended meaning in the listener/reader. Abhinavagupta was one of the pioneers who explained the capacity of signs (*vyañjaka*) such as words or gestures to convey meanings (*vyañjanā*). This topic is part of the philosophy and psychology of language and poetics, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. We therefore turn to the second factor in Abhinavagupta's explanation of the rise of aesthetic feeling in the dramatic context. This involves the power of acting, music, lyrics, and other such aspects of a dramatic performance that further concretize and deepen the meaning conveyed by the script. To put it simply, the verbal and dramatic aspects of a performance convey a powerful meaning of a generalized emotion to the spectators.

The spectator, in turn, must be capable and ready to receive what is thus conveyed. The basic capacity to receive the emotional overtones of the drama involve the inborn drives (*vāsanās*) that render the normal spectators sensitive to natural stimuli that commonly arouse fear, wonder, sexuality, and so on. Such inborn sensitivities can be triggered by symbolic representation of typical "causes" of basic emotions. Indeed, we may at times experience palpitation of the heart or raising of the hair by watching an actor expressing intense fright or anger. However, the explicit or implicit—but common—awareness of the artificiality of the situation makes us realize that mental and bodily reactions aroused by the play do not constitute actual emotions of our own. They are part of an experience widely shared in the audience, a generalized feeling that is not a particularized emotion of either the character, the actor, or any of the spectators. The spectator knows that the arousal of experiences resembling fear or rage do not warrant responses like running away from any danger or striking someone in retaliation. The artistic portrayal of emotions is thus nonthreatening, which makes it possible to "relish" them.

Abhinvagupta is very specific and clear about the importance of the ability of works of art to separate emotions from their common loci, namely, the egos of particular persons at a particular time and place, leading to particular consequences, experiential or behavioral. Being tied to a specific context, the lure or threat of external factors leads to either pleasure or pain, satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the ego. Pried away from that context, the feelings involved in the aesthetic

experience are neither directly pleasurable nor threatening, and they yet strike a chord deep in the psyche of the aesthete. They are enjoyable without being either pleasurable or painful, such that even fear and disgust are "relished." The upshot of Abhinavagupta's view of aesthetic mood is very well expressed in the words of a contemporary author, Suresh Dhayagude (1981): "Rasa is nothing but an experience of the basic psychological proclivities in our nature in an ennobled and heightened form without any selfish, practical and carnal preoccupations" (p. 79).

The recognition of the power of the art experience to rise above egoistic concerns is an important aspect of some of the most dominant values of the Indian culture. Bhaṭṭanāyaka cherished this character of art experience and thought of it as next in value to *ānanda*, the experience of bliss that is said to result from arduous pursuit of self-realization. The Sanskrit expression used to describe the relationship between joy of the art experience and the supreme bliss of Brahman is *brahmānanda sahodara*, which literally means "born from the same womb." This expression recognizes the similarity, but not identity, between the experience of art and the bliss of Brahman. There has been much discussion in recent decades about the nature of the art experience in the context of Indian and Western theories of aesthetics (e.g., Pandey, 1959; Chaitanya, 1965; Chari, 1990), and about the place of aesthetic relish in religious ecstasy (Chaitanya, 1991) and the philosophy of religion (Plott, 1974). Here, I shall restrict the discussion to an interpretation of the *rasa* theory in the context of contemporary psychology of emotion, and then turn to its relevance for the self and self-transformation in the subsequent section.

Indian and Western Views of Emotion: Some Comparative Observations

The fact that critical Indian thinking on emotions occurred extensively in connection with the arts stands in sharp contrast with the prevailing views of emotion in Western psychology (e.g., Arnold, 1960; Calhoun & Solomon, 1984; Frijda, 1986; Izard, 1977; Lyons, 1980), which pay very little attention to aesthetic experience. It is interesting to note that in India critical study of emotion flourished for centuries within the secular domain of dramatics and poetics, although many medieval theories combined such analysis with their philosophical, spiritual, and religious interests. In the secular domain, the application of conceptual analysis was apparently aimed at the improvement of the technical quality of dramatic productions and the enhancement of the art experience. In the spiritual and religious domains, the analysis of aesthetic experience accounted for the uplifting quality of the experience of art. Such accounts were based on the capacity of the relishing of emotional experience for distancing of ego from the mundane concerns of life and the self-transformation resulting from such distancing.

The idea that the experience of art often involves the distancing of the ego from its daily concerns has been made in a clear and forceful way by the British

aestheticist, Edward Bullough (1912/1957). Psychical distance, as he calls it, is distinguished from the physical distance that separates an art object and the person appreciating it. It involves the "distance that appears to lie between our own self and its affections" (p. 94). Bullough points out that psychical distance is "obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends" (p. 96). If we cannot keep such a distance, a tragedy will simply make us feel sad, and "there would indeed be little sense in its existence" (p. 112). The similarity between Bullough's ideas and the *rasa* theorists' notion of the "generalization" of emotion should be obvious. The main point in the *rasa* theorists' explanation of why spectators of a tragedy do not make the sorrow their own and take it home with them, as it were, is that the sorrow experienced in the theater is a "generalized" emotion and not anybody's own. In other words, in watching a theatrical production, the presenters as well as the spectators are able to place the emotions portrayed by the actors in the public domain, rather than "inside" the boundaries of their respective egos. When experienced in the public domain, the sorrow, the fear, the disgust, and other normally unsavory emotions do not cause the same discomfort as when they are experienced as part of one's own self; instead, they become "enjoyable."

The similarities between Bullough's views of psychical distance and the concept of the generalization of emotions in the *rasa* theory are indeed remarkable, given that they appeared in such distant places and times as medieval India and 20th-century England. Contemporary Indian scholars of poetics and aesthetics (e.g., Chaitanya, 1965; Tandan, 1983) have recognized this East–West convergence of perspectives, as well as the psychological and spiritual significance of the power of art experience to distance the aesthete from his or her ego and its concerns. Contemporary psychologists, Indian and Anglo-American, have generally neglected the theoretical and practical implications of the experience of art. There are probably two reasons for this neglect. First, although a field of experimental aesthetics has flourished within the framework of scientific psychology, the strong commitment of mainstream psychology to the natural science model has resulted in its alienation from the fine and performing arts. Second, experimentalist as well as phenomenological approaches to emotion have viewed emotions generally in terms of physical correlates or cognitive appraisals located within the individual, as it were, rather than between individuals. The *rasa* theorists' approach distinctly places art experience in the public domain outside the individual.

As noted in the first section of this chapter, many contemporary social constructionists also locate emotions outside of the individual. However, to my knowledge the social constructionists have not so far turned to the study of emotion in the context of art, nor have they shown much interest in exploiting the implications of this thesis for therapeutic or other potential applications. By contrast, many *rasa* theorists emphasize the potential of the extraindividual location of the art experience in pulling the ego out of its individual concerns. As we

shall see in the following section, the theorists of devotion exploit this potential to devise and explain a program for self-transformation. It is common in Indian communities of artists and aesthetes to consider art, especially classical music, as a form of "meditation," although several others see the performing or listening to music as no more than entertainment.[12] Be that as it may, two medieval scholars, Jīva Gosvāmī and Rūpa Gosvāmī, used the *rasa* theory in the understanding of religious devotion as a means to self-transformation.

Emotion and Self-transformation in Religious Devotion

Religion is clearly one of the taboo topics in psychology today. For William James (1902/1958), religion was not a topic to be avoided; his *Varieties of Religious Experience* is a classic that continues to be widely read. However, as 20th-century psychology became strongly committed to the natural science model, it began dissociate from religion. This does not mean that the dialogue between psychology and religion has come to an end (see Havens, 1968). The study of religion continues to attract a number of psychologists in North America, who have formed their own groups within the Canadian and American psychological associations. However, these groups are relatively small, and the psychology of religion continues to be a marginalized branch of academic psychology in North America. The ideas to be presented in the remainder of this chapter are not only about religion, but also refer to certain aspects of "theology" associated with Hinduism. The theoretical analysis is borrowed from aesthetics (namely, the *rasa* theory discussed above), an area of study that is not closely allied with contemporary psychology. As such, the gap between the predominant contemporary perspectives and those about to be discussed is quite wide.

This situation demands special effort and caution from those on either side, since deep-rooted commitments and unconscious biases could prove to be obstacles in mutual understanding. I say this because my attempts in recent times to communicate my initial observations and preliminary conclusions have drawn strong reactions from some old friends and close colleagues in psychology. Nevertheless, I cannot allow such difficulties in communication to stop me from trying to cross the gulf, for this would be like refusing to start the voyage for fear of falling off the edge of the earth, and then missing the treasures that might lie yonder. Moreover, upon due exploration, if we could discover any conceptual linkages between the hitherto alien viewpoints, then we will have taken important steps in widening our horizons. It is with a sense of optimism in this regard that I venture to discuss certain concepts from the intellectual history of devotional Hinduism in the light of some recent developments in psychology.

Since many Western readers are not likely to be familiar with aspects of the history, basic concepts, and contemporary practices of Hinduism, I shall try to

provide some background. For readers familiar with Hinduism, this would of course be old hat; they could easily skip the relevant portion and read ahead. Self-transformation that is said to result from the practice of religious devotion presumes certain theological doctrines, which I will try to explain briefly. Stating such doctrines does not imply either their acceptance or rejection, defense or refutation on my part; they are part of the cultural context in which certain psychological processes are embedded.

Historical Background of the *Bhakti* Movement and Its Philosophical Bases

The long-standing convention in the Indian tradition is to think of the paths of knowledge, devotion, and action (*jñāna*, *bhakti*, and *karma*) as three major paths to self-transformation or self-realization. The first, presented in the previous chapter, is concerned with the connection between the self and cognition, and the last, to be considered in the next chapter, is concerned with the self and conation. According to the established convention, the path of devotion is clearly concerned with emotion (*bhāva*). Against this background, it makes good sense to try to understand the nature of the "path of devotion" (*bhakti mārga*) in the light of the psychology of emotion.

The history of ideas concerning the nature of deities and forms of worship and devotion in India is long, rich, and diverse. Even a quick look at this history would make it clear that the nature of the ancient Vedic deities and the forms of their worship is in some respects substantially different from the popular deities of medieval India and the forms of devotion to them. Various philosophical accounts explaining their nature have evolved along with the various forms of worship. At least that is what one obtains if and when one takes a historical perspective; such a view might of course be rejected out of hand by those who presume a timeless character of the deities and forms of devotion. Many of the prominent deities of ancient Vedas, such as Indra, the king of the gods, were ostensibly superhuman beings out of reach for ordinary mortals. Several other Vedic deities such as Agni and Marut were presiding deities of forces of nature such as fire and wind. By comparison, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are believed by many to be historic figures of the post-Vedic period; they were presumably persons of flesh and blood who lived among ordinary mortals. It is a common Hindu belief that both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were incarnations of Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the world,[13] who appeared on earth to relieve humankind from its tormentors.

Indeed, while Kṛṣṇa is considered to be the ideal human being (*puruṣottama*), Rāma is often viewed as an ideal within human limitations (*maryādā puruṣottama*). The human features of Rāma and his consort Sītā are said to be typically illustrated by a particular episode in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*: Sītā was lured by a demon in the form of an attractive golden deer, which eluded Rāma in a chase, thereby

leading to her capture by Rāvaṇa, the evil king of Sri Lanka. Regardless of the many differences between their stories, both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa can be thought of either as the divinity come down to the human level or humanity elevated to the divine level. Either way, their characterization as human figures suggests that the gap between the human and the divine can be bridged. The psychological significance of this is that, unlike superhuman gods and goddesses or the deified natural forces of the Vedas, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are considered to be models of personhood that ordinary human beings could emulate. Moreover, the rich narratives and artistic presentations of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and other such deities as persons who lived among other humans are the key to understanding the path of devotion as a means to the devotees' self-transformation.

From the ancient Vedic phase to the medieval development of religious devotion, there has been growth in the variety of ways in which self-transformation was thought of in terms of its ends and means, theory and practice, heroes and followers. In its ancient Vedic phase, the aim of religious practice was to attain a place in the otherworldly life after death by performing daily and occasional rituals enjoined by the Vedas. The philosophical system of Mīmāṁsā developed by way of the clarification of the details regarding the performance of the rituals through the correct interpretation of the Vedic texts. It was called the path of action (*karma mārga*), since the focus was on performing actions as prescribed. Its followers were members of the upper castes who were eligible to perform the rituals, and presumably priests and scholars were their leaders. Later on, in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, emphasis was shifted away from ritual action to performing worldly action without being attached to or hankering for the fruits of actions, or by surrendering the fruits to the Lord. As noted in the previous chapter and earlier in this chapter, the path of knowledge prescribed by the Advaita Vedānta and Sāṅkhya systems was also aimed at permanent release (*mukti*) from the cycle of action and consequences, birth and death. Although this path was open in principle to all upper-caste members eligible to study the Vedas (particularly the Upaniṣads), in practice it was open only to a small segment of that population who were prepared to undertake the highly demanding preparation and the still harder practice of meditation.

By sharp contrast, the path of devotion was from the beginning open for men, women, and children of all ages and castes. The main feature of this path was of course a large pantheon of personalized gods and goddesses of varied character who could appeal to men, women, and children of all types of background and character. What has now been called Hinduism has been a way of life that has allowed many forms of worship with no holds barred. Even atheism is not a problem, as the prominent place of the Sāṅkhya philosophy in Indian thought clearly testifies. Unlike the Sāṅkhyas, however, most other schools of Indian thought have been theistic.

The roots of theistic systems of India are undoubtedly in the Vedas. Having

developed through an unbroken tradition over the millennia, diverse forms of devotional religion and philosophy flourished in the medieval times, leading to what has been called the "*bhakti* movement" (Bahirat, 1981; Sharma, 1987). The different sects and schools of thought within this movement varied greatly in terms of their preferred ends and means, primary literature, the philosophical rationale, as well as their leaders and followers. For many of the non-Advaitic Vedāntists, such as the followers of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka, and Vallabha, release from the cycle of karma is the primary goal, devotion is the means, and the Upaniṣads and their aphoristic summary (*Brahmasūtra*) and the Gītā are the primary literature. However, with the growth of the devotional movement, the focus shifts increasingly away from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads (collectively called the *śruti*) to different, historically later genres of the Sanskrit literature such as the great epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* (classed under the category of *smṛti*), the Purāṇas, and specific sectarian literature such as the *Pāñcarātra Saṁhita*, *Śākta Tantra*, and so on. Although some schools of the devotional movement, such as the one represented by the saint–poet Kabīr (15th century), focus on an abstract and qualityless god (*nirguṇa bhakti*), most other schools focus on God as concretized in the form of putatively actual and historical figures such as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

The divinization of human characters also narrows the gap between the mundane and the concrete on the one side and the ideal and the abstract on the other. In my view, the great potential of the path of devotion for self-transformation resides in such closure of the gap; the deity seems at once lodged far away in the unattainable realm of lofty ideals and magical powers, yet at the same time it is placed close at hand in a human form. This feat of closing the gap is accomplished by the richness of the great Indian epics and the *Purāṇas*, a genre of writings considered "mythology" from the Western viewpoint. Unlike the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, access to the Purāṇas is not restricted by the caste bar. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads were cloistered within the confines of demanding and rigorous rules of Sanskrit grammar; unraveling their meaning required the knowledge of the rules of logic spelled out by the Nyāya system. Their niceties were shrouded in the complicated arguments and controversies among the various schools of Upaniṣadic and Buddhist thought. By sharp contrast, the epics were made accessible in many Indian languages; the stories in the epics and the Purāṇas were open to be told, retold, and endlessly modified into regional and individual variations, and were immensely popularized through the means of classical and folk art. Such open access to the stories of the gods and the goddesses is an important aspect in understanding the psychological principles and processes involved in the practice of devotional religion in India.

The Literary and Artistic Context of the Path of Devotion

The literal concretization of God in the form of an image (*mūrti*) is a common aspect of religious devotion in the *bhakti* movement. This may be viewed as an aid

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in the presentation of the deity in the form of a person, a man, woman, or child. When the deity is conceived of as a representation of an essentially impersonal entity, it is merely an object of consciousness, regardless of whether it is represented by a physical entity, or by an abstract symbol like ॐ.[14] In that case, the devotee is a mere subject who might direct his or her consciousness toward the deity as an object of awareness like any other intentional object. Psychologically, what comes into play in such a case is primarily cognition, with very little meaningful action or intense affect accompanying it. Also, the relationship with an impersonal object is only a one-way affair: from the subject to the object. However, when the deity is personalized, the devotee is a self and the deity becomes the other, thus opening up the potential for an entire range of reciprocal relationships of affection, love, admiration, forgiveness, compassion, and even envy, fear, and hate.

What the epics and the Purāṇas have accomplished is precisely this: the concretization of gods and goddesses in human form interacting with ordinary mortals. The epics accomplish the task of depicting their heroes in great detail on a large canvas of, well, epic proportions. In *Rāmāyaṇa* the story of Rāma unfolds in the form of the entire life history of a person from before his birth till some time after his death. Hundreds of events occur across a vast subcontinent as Rāma grows up as a prince in the Ganges plateau; he moves to forests in the south when sent into exile; there he makes friends with a band of monkeys (or monkeylike tribal people); the band joins him in fighting a war with the devious king of Sri Lanka, and they win back Rāma's kidnapped wife. Kṛṣṇa is a dominant figure in the epic *Mahābārata*, and the hero of the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa. His life history is embedded in the story of a fracticidal war of eonic significance, and the narrative of over 100,000 verses covers numerous intricate episodes and a large number of complex characters. While the epic covers Kṛṣṇa's adult life, the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa covers his childhood in great detail. Given the large number of such literary works devoted to Kṛṣṇa, together they constitute probably the richest narrative dedicated to a single personage in the history of the world. This narrative portrays him elaborately in a variety of social roles as an ideal son, brother, friend, warrior, king, husband, statesman, strategist, ally, philosopher, and so on. Rāma, too, is described in terms of similar roles, although the ideals he presents are in many respects quite different. For instance, while Rāma is a most devoted husband in a strictly monogamous relationship, Kṛṣṇa is a lover par excellence sought after by countless women. The fact that the epics and the Purāṇas present a very wide range of alternative ideals is extremely important in that together they offer an immense range of choice. There is a role model here to suit men, women, and children of any age, era, background, temperament, or taste.

The timeless appeal of the complex plots, unique characters, and superb narratives of the epics is evidenced by the fact that for centuries they have been told again and again in a dozen languages and in as many varied artistic media. Stories about Rāma and Kṛṣṇa continue to be subjects of innumerable plays, novels,

poems, dances, dance dramas, folk tales, folk drama, cinema, and every other conceivable form of literary and artistic narrative. While for hundreds of years the stories were commonly told by uneducated folk artists in village fairs, recently both the epics were rendered as immensely popular TV serials made by slick producers and actors of Bollywood, i.e., Bombay's equivalent of Hollywood. There is also Peter Brook's *Mahābhārata*, a French cinematic production studded with an international cast. Thanks to the lack of copyright, the stories have been elaborated, modified, and adopted, and thanks to the lack of fanatic censorship, they are also endlessly parodied. It is well-known that the epics have become part of the cultures of Bali and Sumatra in radically modified forms.

As parts of a living tradition, the legacy of the epics has inspired the retelling of the old plots in new ways suitable to the changing times and contexts. In British India, for instance, the Marathi playwright Khadilkar wrote a play based on the episode in *Mahābhārata* about the slaying of Kīcaka. It was presented in such a way that the villain was made to appear like Lord Curzon, the then-ruling British Viceroy who was highly unpopular for his policies in Bengal. More recently, an Indian movie presented the story of a feud between two families of industrialists with characters named after the cousins who fought the cataclysmic war of the *Mahābhārata*. The idea is, clearly, that human nature has not changed over the eons, nor have problems in life; we now fight over technology and capital even as our ancestors fought over their share of the kingdom. Contemporary feminists have replayed the stories of Sītā and Draupadī as the most wronged women in the history of the Indian culture, and in my opinion, rightly so. The continual reinterpretation of the plots and characters from the epics and the Purāṇas indicates that they are powerful narratives about emotional issues and problems of human relationships of relevance to every generation. What the epics and Purāṇas offer is not simply information and entertainment about putatively historical events and imaginary characters, but insights and concrete suggestions suitable for important issues of our lives in our times.

The importance of this cultural legacy for the study of emotion should now be obvious. The literary and fictional description and analysis of human emotions and behavior can be as illuminating and instructive as the scientific ones. This is certainly not a lesson to be learned only from the epics of India; the same is true in regard to rich literary and folk traditions of the rest of the world. Although a majority of contemporary psychologists prefer the scientific approach over the literary approach, a small number of prominent modern psychologists have derived inspiration from the literary traditions: Sigmund Freud, Henry Murray, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson, and Jerome Bruner, to name a few. What is special about the study of emotions in India is that, as noted, it flourished in the context of the study of dramatics, poetics, and aesthetics. More specifically, as I shall soon try to show, the powerful literary and artistic portrayal of a single character, Kṛṣṇa, was used as a vehicle for systematic self-transformation.

The relevance of the character of Kṛṣṇa as a vehicle for self-transformation directly follows from his portrayal as a multifaceted character who plays a key role in a vast number of lives. Throughout his life, he befriends, teaches, protects, elevates, and enchants many "good" men and women, even as he cajoles, tricks, punishes, and destroys many "bad" persons such as despots and villains. All in all, Kṛṣṇa is shown as a most endearing person in varied forms of relationships: as a mischievous but lovable son to his foster parents, a close and loyal friend to simple-minded boyhood playmates, a supportive confidant to several sisterly cousins and relatives, an honest friend and advisor to the Pāṇḍava brothers, a highly respected statesman wanted by both sides of a fratricidal war, a skilled military strategist, and an erudite scholar who put together a lucid compendium of a dozen different schools of philosophy in the form of a "celestial song," the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Moreover, the aspect that has endeared Kṛṣṇa to countless generations is his image as a consummate lover who enchanted every young milkmaid in the town of Vraj.

A character that is elevated to such heights is bound to be seen as too good to be true. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa has been deified more willingly, blatantly, fully, and audaciously by his devotees than were Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed by their respective followers. Regardless of whether one believes or disbelieves, likes or dislikes, deification, it may be noted that Kṛṣṇa is nevertheless described as *puruṣottama*, meaning the ideal person. From the point of view of theories of personality, the image of Kṛṣṇa may be rightly viewed as an ideal of personhood. The psychological significance of such a model resides in it potential to serve as a useful guidepost for a program of self-transformation. For anyone who chooses him as an ideal, Kṛṣṇa was a man in flesh and blood, someone who faced the problems of ordinary mortals through childhood and old age. One can relate to him as a "real" human being who was mischievous as a child, teased the milkmaids as a young man, "played politics" during his adult life, even advised his friends to tell half truths, and tricked his adversaries on the battlefield. Regardless of the fact that Kṛṣṇa is also presented as a super miracle maker, ordinary mortals can still relate to him as a child, friend, lover, philosopher, hero, or in any such role as they may feel comfortable in relating.

The Role of Fine and Performing Arts in Devotional Religion

Anyone acquainted with the Indian culture would know that the fine and performing arts of India have been dominated by the Hindu pantheon just as themes from the life of Jesus dominated European art and architecture for centuries. Kṛṣṇa is arguably the most popular character presented in a large variety of art forms in India. The love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa, in particular, has inspired several superb works of art. Prominent among such works is the *Gīta-Govinda*, a book of poems composed in the 12th century by the Sanskrit poet Jayadeva. These poems

(popularly including the *aṣṭapadīs*, i.e., octets) express various shades of the most intense feelings of love, including romantic love in its most earthy, evocative, and erotic forms. Rādhā's intense and most selfless love for Kṛṣṇa is often considered the highest form of the expression of love between the devotee and the Lord (*madhurā bhakti*). Jayadeva's poems, which may be counted among the best in love poetry in any language, are sung as part of temple rituals in various parts of India. Over the centuries, the themes of these poems have inspired some of the most gifted painters, singers, and dancers to present them in their respective forms of art. Time and again world-class singers and dancers have presented these poems as songs set to music in various classical modes or *rāgas*, and as themes for dances choreographed in various classical and folk styles. More recently, stories about Kṛṣṇa have appeared in separate TV serials and have even appeared in children's comics and cartoons.

Here, let me try to clarify the significance of the historical and cultural background as outlined thus far for the topic on hand. First, it should help us recognize that the concept of devotion and theories of emotion presented here are embedded in a rich cultural legacy that has developed over many centuries. Second, the repetition of the common stories in many forms makes the concept of devotion easily accessible to millions of ordinary members of the culture. Third, the artistic presentation of the devotional themes in visual and auditory forms makes them psychologically effective just as the multimedia presentation of advertisements makes them more effective than those presented in single sensory modalities. Fourth, it is important to understand that the close alliance between the fine and performing arts and Hindu theology provided the background against which Jīva and Rūpa Gosvāmī developed a theory of aesthetics to help explain the nature and efficacy of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

The Interpretation of the Path of Devotion in Terms of the *Rasa* Theory: The Views of Jīva and Rūpa Gosvāmī

Jīva Gosvāmī (15th century) and his nephew Rūpa Gosvāmī (1492–1591) were followers of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu (1485–1533). Their views became known as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school of thought because *Gauḍa* is name of the province of Bengal where it flourished, and *Vaiṣṇava* means pertaining to Viṣṇu whose incarnation Kṛṣṇa is supposed to be. Unlike other Vaiṣṇavas (worshippers of Viṣṇu) such as Rāmānuja and Nimbārka who interpreted their devotion to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa within the framework of non-Advaitic Vedānta, the Gosvāmīs chose a conceptual framework from the *rasa* theory of the dramaturgical and aesthetic tradition. In this respect the ideas of Rūpa Gosvāmī radically differ not only from the six major schools of Indian thought, but also from most other schools of the *bhakti* tradition. In contrast with Sāṅkhya's view, which exclusively emphasizes self-knowldge and cognitive deconstruction of the ego as means to self-transformation while nearly completely neglecting emotion and action, the Gosvāmīs emphasize emotion and devotion while completely neglecting cognition and knowledge.

Before turning to the Gosvāmīs' conception of emotion, it is necessary to sketch the fundamental notions of their worldview. One of their most fundamental concepts is derived from the Upaniṣadic notion that the ultimate reality, or Brahman, is characterized by the triune of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. Of these three characteristics, the Gauḍīya school puts greatest emphasis on Bliss (*ānanda*). The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (2.7) contains the statement "*raso vai saḥ*," which, when freely paraphrased in English, means that the Brahman *is* its essence, i.e., *rasa*. The subsequent statements of the Upaniṣad clarify that here *rasa*, or essence, means Bliss. As noted in Chapter 2, this Bliss is estimated to be 100 quintillion times greater than all the pleasures that a young, well-endowed human being can enjoy. Whether hyperbolic or not, this "psychometric" account shows how highly valued the state of Bliss is in the eyes of those of the Upaniṣadic tradition. It may be noted, incidentally, that this idea of extraordinary levels of happiness stands in sharp contrast with the Buddhist and Sāṅkhya conceptions of life as a bottomless pit of suffering. At any rate, the Gauḍīya thinkers aim at nothing short of scaling this peak of bliss, and they expect to succeed by means of intense devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Having started with the foundational notion that Bliss is the *rasa* or essence of Brahman, Jīva Gosvāmī moves on to conception of *rasa* as aesthetic relish as developed in the dramaturgical tradition of Bharata (see J. Gosvāmī, 1986). He and Rūpa took many concepts from that tradition, reorganized, reinterpreted, and adapted them for their purpose. It may be recalled that, when Bharata first introduced the concept of *rasa*, he identified eight aesthetic moods corresponding to eight durable emotions (see Table 5.3). Whether Bharata recognized any more *rasas* is a somewhat controversial issue. At any rate, over the centuries, new ideas kept being introduced to the *rasa* theory, some of them claiming recognition of new and distinctive *rasas*. Udbhaṭa (ca. 800) for instance, introduced the idea of a ninth distinctive aesthetic mood of quietude (*śānta*). Similarly, Rudraṭa (800–850) suggested friendly affection (*preyān*, *sneha*) and Bhoja (of unknown date) argued in support of affection for children (*vatsala*). The scholarly community would not accept such claims without considerable debate; the history of ideas in this field is full of strong arguments and sharp exchanges.

It is widely recognized by historians of Indian aesthetics that Abhinavagupta (ca. 990–1020) effectively persuaded the scholarly community to recognize quietude (*śānta*) as a distinct aesthetic mood, and to add it as the ninth *rasa* to Bharata's list of eight. The nature and number of *rasas* has been a contentious and keenly debated issue in the history of Indian aesthetics (Raghavan, 1967). Abhinavagupta's success in enlarging the list is therefore considered a great tribute to his stature as a scholar. Several centuries later, Viśvanātha (1300–1384) made a strong case for the recognition of affection for children (*vatsala*) as another major *rasa*.

Love for the divine (*bhakti*) was also proposed, but had not yet been widely accepted as a major *rasa*, when Jīva Gosvāmī suggested that it was the single-most dominant one. Rūpa Gosvāmī took all these ideas and proposed a list of 12 *rasas*, all being considered as but variations of *bhakti*. His scheme organized the 12 in two subsets: the first set included five major *rasas*, and second had seven minor ones. Table 5.4 represents his scheme, as suggested in Rūpa Gosvāmī's (1981, 1986) *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu* and *Ujjwalanīlamaṇi*.

Rūpa Gosvāmī's view that all aesthetic moods are but variations of, and subordinate to, the devotional mood follows from his two basic premises: that Bliss is the single prominent feature or essence of the entire reality (*Brahman*), and *rasa* as aesthetic relish is but a variation of the Bliss of Brahman described in the *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad. If the whole reality is Blissful, as the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas suggest, then why is it that all of us do not experience that bliss? Moreover, why do some of us turn to God, while many others do not? From the Gauḍīya viewpoint, these questions do have answers. Here again, the *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad provides a clue. Just prior to the statement that says that Brahman is *rasa*, the Upaniṣad (2.6–7) refers to the view about the genesis of the universe expressed in the *Ṛg Veda* (10.129.1). According to this view, at the beginning the universe existed as a single undivided whole. It mysteriously recognized that it was alone, and felt inspired to see itself as many. It is believed that ever since that moment (the Big Bang?), each individual being, a chip off the same old block, aspires to return to the whole, thereby trying to regain the original Bliss. This would explain why all human beings aspire to become united with Kṛṣṇa, who is the embodiment of Brahman.

TABLE 5.4
Rūpa Gosvāmī's View of the Varieties of Devotional Moods and the Corresponding Emotions

Devotional moods (*rasas*)	Corresponding emotions (*bhāvas*)
Major devotional moods	
1. *Śānta bhakti*	Quietude (*śānta*)
2. *Prīti bhakti, dāsya bhakti*	Reverence for superiors (*dāsya*)
3. *Preyān bhakti, maitrī bhakti*	Friendship among equals (*sakhya*)
4. *Vatsala bhakti*	Affection for subordinates (*vātsalya*)
5. *Madhurā bhakti*	Romantic love (*śṛṅgāra*)
Minor devotional moods	
6. The comic (*hāsya*)	Mirth (*hāsa*)
7. The marvelous (*adbhuta*)	Astonishment (*vismaya*)
8. The heroic (*vīra*)	Energy/mastery (*utsāha*)
9. Pathos (*karuṇa*)	Sorrow (*śoka*)
10. Horror (*bhayānaka*)	Fear (*bhaya*)
11. The furious (*raudra*)	Anger (*krodha*)
12. The odious (*bībhatsa*)	Disgust (*jugupsā*)

According to the Gosvāmīs, the whole of reality, Brahman, is personified as Kṛṣṇa. He is all powerful, and one of his many powers is the "power to bring happiness" (*hlādinī śakti*). This power manifests variously in all individual beings, prompting them to seek unification with Kṛṣṇa. This power is personified in its best form as Rādhā. Other milkmaids of the town of Vraja also loved Kṛṣṇa, but not with the same degree of selflessness, purity of heart, and intensity as did Rādhā. They differed in their ways of loving God, and so do all creatures. Implicitly, what prevents us from merging fully in God and experiencing the Bliss is our individuality, or the narrowness of our egos. But then why do we all have more or less small egos, some narrower than others? It has been a common belief in the Indian tradition that individual differences are congenital; they result from the unique past history of each individual creature (*jīva*), starting from the moment when the One divided itself into many. Moreover, human beings are free to act according to their will; each one of us reaps what we sow; we are what we are today because of our own past karma. We are free to choose or not choose God. It is safe to assume that this belief was shared by thinkers of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition. The idea that individuals have a tendency to seek happiness by merging themselves into something larger or with someone else is by no means an exclusively Indian idea. It resonates with David Bakan's (1966) notion of *communion*, i.e., the tendency among individuals to merge into something larger.

At any rate, seen from the Gauḍīya point of view, each individual's ability to enjoy aesthetic relish, or *rasa*, is commensurate with his or her ability to overcome the limits of one's individuality or ego and become absorbed into the publicly shared or "generalized" emotions. As may be noted from Table 5.4, in Rūpa Gosvāmī's conceptual scheme, four out of five of the major devotional moods pertain to affection or love in interpersonal relationships. It is necessary to note in this context that Rūpa explicitly states that the moods are listed in the order of increasing superiority.[15] Given that the list places the devotee's relationship with his or her superiors at the lowest rung and relationships with equals, subordinates, and lover(s) at increasingly higher levels, the quality of devotion seems to be judged higher with increased levels of intimacy with God. Also, it might be fair to say that that intensity of the longing to merge with the deity is the strongest in the highest ranked romantic form and the lowest in the "quiet" form illustrated by devotees who have cultivated dispassionate attitudes. The meaning of this is clear: In Rūpa Gosvāmī's view, the greater the level of intimacy and intensity with which the devotee approaches the deity, the truer the devotion, the greater the reciprocity on God's side, and therefore, the greater the bliss experienced. Rūpa explicitly states that the lowest form of devotional love is exemplified by the joy (*saukhya*) by devotees such as Sanaka and Sanandana, who had attained high levels of dispassionateness and quietude of the mind, as yogis do. The joy experienced by yogis

(*yoginām sukham*) is joy grounded in the self (*ātmasaukhya*), which is not very deep (*aghana*) when compared to the deep happiness experienced in the presence of God.[16] The highest level of bliss is attained by the devotees joined with Kṛṣṇa in a most intimate romantic love as was Rādhā.

This principle seems to be applicable in a similar manner to art experience: the greater the intensity with which one "flings" oneself into the process of creating or appreciating an object of art, the deeper the aesthetic experience. Put in a different way, the more one moves away from one's ego toward the object of art—or of devotion—the greater the intensity of experience. If this idea helps explain the gradation of divine love from the quiet to romantic forms (as represented in Table 5.4), in what way are the comic, the marvelous, and even the odious all variations of the devotional mood? In this regard, Rūpa Gosvāmī invokes a principle from the theory of aesthetics, which states that some transient (*vyabhicāri*) emotions are often present as ancillaries when one experiences an aesthetic mood associated with a durable or "major" emotion. For example, bashfulness, a transient emotion, might accompany as an ancillary to the more durable erotic feeling when one experiences the aesthetic mood of love. Similarly, in the experience of the major devotional mood of divine love as friendship among equals (*maitrī bhakti*), the comic mood might appear as an ancillary mood. A typical Gauḍīya example would be to imagine a situation in the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa, where Sudāmā and other boyhood friends of Kṛṣṇa are enjoying each others' company, and laughter breaks out when Kṛṣṇa plays a practical joke on the milkmaids. Similarly, horror and even the odious mood are aroused when the devotee is watching a play in which Kṛṣṇa slays a demon and the demon's blood and guts spill out. Nevertheless, these ancillary moods only deepen the admiration and love of the devotees for their hero. Given that the Gosvāmīs follow the dramaturgical model and use the enormously rich narratives containing an endless variety of situations and characters, any type of emotion and aesthetic mood can be placed in the context of a single mood, devotion.

Individual Differences among Devotees and Their Choice of Appropriate Forms of Relating to Kṛṣṇa

The path of devotion may be understood basically as a way to improve and enhance one's ways of loving God and sharing the Bliss that He incarnates. However, given our distinct individuality, each person, if he or she wishes, must begin in whatever way he or she feels comfortable, and continue at a pace and in a manner that is appropriate for his or her temperament and needs from time to time. Shrivatsa Goswami (1982), a contemporary author who writes about *bhakti* as conceived in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, explains the approach to the path of devotion in a simple and lucid manner:

> Because of its finite basis ... worldly love ... cannot lead to infinite and eternal bliss, and it is to this that the human quest tends. The limited phenomenal *rasa* must finally be transmuted into the transcendent, absolute *rasa*. To attain such a *rasa* the devotee chooses a personally suitable mode of relation with Krishna [*sic*] from those exemplified by the people of Vraja. The deep loving relation is crystallized in certain conceits that a devotee must adopt. One may regard Krishna as one's master, charge, friend, or beloved. Such conceits, remembered from dramatic situations in Vraja and gradually appropriated, give rise to permanent relationships. One comes to consider Krishna as a master (*dāsya*), a son (*vātsalya*), a friend (*sakhya*) or a beloved (*mādhurya*). When catalyzed by ancillary factors, these modes of intense attraction and attachment (*rati*), the substantive causes (*sthāyī-bhāva*) of love, culminate in the ultimate aesthetic experience of Krishna-*rasa*. Such realization is the highest form of love.[17]

As suggested by Goswami, a particular individual may choose to position him- or herself vis-à-vis Kṛṣṇa (or another deity of his or her choice) in the role of a servant, child, parent, friend, or a lover. It is my impression, however, that in practice, a particular mode of orientation may be the preferred or dominant for a particular devotee rather than an exclusive one. Thus, in a Sanskrit prayer that is a most common part of the daily ritual of countless Hindus, the devotees refer to the Lord as their mother, father, brother, and friend. At any rate, *bhakti* as described by Shrivatsa Goswami can be said to involve the cultivation of an intensely emotional relationship with the deity in a particular preferred role in such a way that the devotee is totally engulfed in the experience of the devotional mood (*bhakti rasa*).

There are some well-known examples of the cultivation of specific role relationship with God. The women saint–poetesses Janābāī (1260–1353) and Mīrābāī (16th century), for instance, are said to have appointed themselves as a servant and a lover of God, respectively. For long periods they engaged themselves in behaviors that could be safely called *role-play* in contemporary psychological terms. In more recent times, Ramakrishna Parmahamsa (1836–1886) is reported to have played the role of a child to the goddess Kālī in whose temple outside Calcutta he served as a priest (Kakar, 1991, p. 21). For some 6 months he is said to have dressed, lived, and behaved like a young woman, playing the role of Rādhā in relation to Kṛṣṇa. This idea of a man becoming a servant or lover of God is of course not exclusive to Hinduism; the Sufi saint Rumi is said to have thought of himself as "God's slave." According to A. R. Arasteh (1980) some Sufis thought of the "I–thou" relationship between a person and God as a "spiritual marriage" (p. 122). Besides servant and lover, there are certain examples of unique role relationships. In one of his poems, the 13th-century Marathi saint–poet Naraharī Sonār, a goldsmith by occupation, refers to God as his customer. There is a legend about him that once he was called on to make a golden ornament for the idol of Viṭhobā in Paṇḍharpur.[18] In that sense, God became his customer! In his poem Naraharī interprets this unique relationship in terms of a highly imaginative symbolism, saying that he uses his intellect as the scissors to steal the gold of *bhakti* while cutting a deal with his customer—God.

Examples of devotion expressed in the form of serious, sustained, and complete role-play are quite rare. In its ordinary form, devotion is usually expressed through a variety of *rituals*. The rituals may be performed on a daily, weekly, monthly, or annual basis; they may be occasional or regular, individual or collective, at home or in the temple, spontaneous or organized. Nine different forms of worship are commonly suggested in the literature:[19]

1. Listening to the stories about God (*śravaṇam*)
2. Singing songs and chanting (*kīrtanam*)
3. Remembering or repeating God's name (*viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam*)
4. Offering foot-salutation (*pādasevanam*)
5. Worshipping by offering flowers, food, incense, and so on (*arcanam*)
6. Offering salutation and praise (*vandanam*)
7. Offering service, or becoming God's servant (*dāsyam*)
8. Cultivating friendship or love for God (*sakhyam*)
9. Offering one's self to God (*ātmanivedanam*)[20]

These different forms of worship are often considered secondary or subordinate (*gauṇī*) ways of devotion. Some of these forms, such as offering flowers, burning incense, singing prayers, and the like are parts of daily rituals for many Hindus. The seventh and eighth forms in the above list, namely becoming a servant or expressing friendship, are not easy to practice as part of rituals, nor are they "secondary" or relatively superficial. Indeed, they are considered major forms by Rūpa Gosvāmī (see Table 5.4). The last one, offering one's self (*ātmanivedanam*), is anything but secondary; it implies surrendering or dissolving the ego—a highly difficult feat.[21]

Much of what has been said about devotional Hinduism so far in this chapter is common knowledge to those who may have followed or studied Hinduism. It is not common, however, to find a psychological analysis or understanding of the same. In the balance of this chapter, I wish to attempt a psychological analysis and interpretation of the path of devotion in the light of the concepts of Indian and Western psychology. My focus will be on the processes of self-transformation that might result from the practice of major and subordinate forms of devotion. Before turning to such an analysis, it will be useful to briefly describe what an ideal devotee is supposed to be like. Such a description would suggest a benchmark for assessing a devotee's progress on the path of devotion.

The Ideal Devotee: Character and Rarity

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is clearly one of the most highly respected texts in the Indian tradition. Ascribed to Kṛṣṇa, the views of the *Gītā* are particularly authoritative and significant from the point of view of the followers of the devotional path. In the 12th chapter, the *Gītā* (12.13–20) presents a description of an ideal devotee.

The most distinctive features of an ideal devotee are that he or she has no ill will toward any creature, is friendly, forgiving, compassionate, and devoid of egoism. A true devotee is even minded in the face of pain or pleasure, always manifesting inner contentment; he or she is free from bursts of joy, anger, fear, and agitation. No longer troubled by desires, he or she neither hates nor rejoices, is equally fair to friend and foe, and is not swayed by either flattery or insult. This ideal of personhood has been popularized in various ways by the followers of the *bhakti* movement. In a famous poem titled "*vaiṣṇava jana to tene kahiye*" composed in Gujarati by Saint Narasi Mehta (1415–1481), for instance, much of the same ideas are expressed. Mahatma Gandhi included this song as part of his prayer meetings, thereby gaining from and adding to the immense popularity of the song and its ideals. To put it simply, a person who has traversed the path of devotion and reached its destination has two major characteristics: he or she is rid of egoism and no longer experiences emotional ups and downs.

This description of the ideal devotee closely resembles its accounts of those who have reached the state of a "stable intellect" after successfully traversing the path of knowledge (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, 2.55–72). In other words, the path of knowledge leads to the same destination as does the path of devotion. Both help dissolve the ego and end the game of seesaw that tosses us between affective peaks and troughs with each gain and loss. Many partisans of the path of devotion, including the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, think that the path of their choice leads to greater heights than other paths. They claim that it takes the devotee to the highest levels of Bliss, not merely to the cessation of suffering promised by Sāṅkhya. The 17th-century saint–poet Tukārām (1973, poem 3251) describes his experience of Bliss thus: "There are waves of joy in a cavernous lake of joy; there is joy inside and out!"[22] Having tasted this infinite bliss, Tukā (as Tukārām called himself) is no longer interested in ending the cycle of birth and death promised by the Vedāntists for those who set out on the path of knowledge. Perpetuating infinite Bliss is far better than ending the cycle of birth and death; he would happily suffer through the pangs of waiting in the womb to be born again into a life of hardships, so he can immerse himself into the joy of devotion to God.

The path of devotion is claimed to be superior in many ways: it does not require prerequisite qualifications, and hence is easily accessible to all, plus it is easy to practice. No wonder, then, that millions are attracted to it. But, alas, devotees such as Tukārām or Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who manifest lack of egoism and infinite compassion in their behavior, are very rare. Moreover, despite the millions that flock to the temples and pray at home every day, there seems to be an extreme shortage of bliss and a superabundance of suffering and malaise. Why are the devotees of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa busy pulling each other down within their communities and are equally busy fighting crusades with outsiders to their faith?

To help understand the rarity of ideal devotees, we may turn to the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (7.16), which identifies four types of devotees: some are in distress, some

curious, some are seeking wealth, and there are a few wise ones. The wise ones, alas, are in minority; a large majority turn to God only when they are in some kind of trouble—illness, a court case, death in the family—and when no ordinary measure seems to work. Rare are the devotees who are willing to offer themselves unselfishly as true devotees should. Worse still, a common custom in India is to make a "contract" to offer something to God, if he or she gets something in return: hitting a jackpot in a lottery, success in a court case, passing an examination, or a nod from the paramour. Offering oneself completely (*ātmanivedanam*) is the last thing on the minds of a vast majority of the garden variety of devotees.

Emotion and Self-transformation in Religious Devotion: A Psychological Interpretation

In this concluding section of the chapter on self and emotion, I shall try to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the path of devotion with a focus on understanding self and emotion in the light of philosophical and psychological principles discussed earlier.

Ontological and Epistemological Issues

The concept of God, whether personal or impersonal, is totally incommensurable with the worldview of science that prevails today in psychology as well as other fields. From the standpoint of science, the concept of God, particularly in a personalized form implied in devotion, must be pure fiction. But seen from a "scientific" psychological point of view, fictions sometimes matter as much if not more than facts. Speaking about the fictional character of the concept of self, the psychologist Donald Hebb (1960) once said: "The self is a fantasy all right, but a real fantasy with effects on human behavior" (p. 741). Hebb gave a simple analogy in support of his argument. A phantom limb is clearly an imaginary entity, but the pain or pleasure experienced in it is no less "real" than in the original limb prior to its amputation. The story of Kṛṣṇa arouses passion in the same way that fictional characters such as Hamlet or Iago do. At any rate, given our focus on the psychology of emotion, we should sidestep the issue of the ontological status of the deity, and focus instead on the ontological status of emotion, which is clearly the most central psychological issue concerning the path of devotion.

From the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava point of view, the physical or bodily aspects of emotional experience and expression are far from irrelevant. Indeed, the Gosvāmīs devote an inordinate amount of space in their writings to provide a highly detailed description of the gross as well as the minute physical features of dozens of emotional states, even as Bharata did in his dramaturgical writings. However, unlike the "naturalistic" theories of emotion such as those of James, Cannon, Delgado, and others, they do not try to reduce emotions to their physical concomitants. Instead, much like the social constructionists, the Gosvāmīs, following the

rasa theorists, place emotions in the social or interpersonal space. There is little meaning to love outside the space between the lover and the beloved. In this sense, the Gosvāmīs' conception of reality resembles what John Shotter (1993) calls the "conversational reality." In this domain, ontological issues such as the mind–body problem do not matter much; it is not very important to ask whether bodily reactions result in emotional experience or vice versa. Nor is it very important to raise the epistemic issue such as "how do we empirically verify whether the person under observation is experiencing the emotion X?" Instead, emotions are recognized as a matter of mutual relationships between persons and as a matter of experience and understanding. Regardless of the many differences between them in ontological, epistemological, and ideological matters, the social constructionists and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavites are alike in stressing that it is important to conceptualize emotions primarily (if not exclusively) as a matter of the relationship between the self and the other, between persons who understand and relate to each other in terms of the mutuality of social roles in a given culture.

Against this background, it may be fair to say that Averill's (1980) notion of emotions as transitional social roles is fairly applicable to Rūpa Gosvāmī's notion of devotional feeling as a form of affection in the mutuality of relationships between parents and children, masters and servants, friends, or lover and beloved. Outside of such paired social roles structured within a larger society, Sarbin (1986, pp. 90) speaks of a different, dramatistic type of roles. Thus, in Sarbin's view, Hamlet is a prototypical "avenger," Othello a "jealous husband," and Iago the epitome of "envy, rancor and hatred." Such dramatistic roles, he says, "exist in story telling of fables, fairy tales, morality plays, bedtime stories, soap operas ... and myths and folktales of a society" (p. 91). Seen from this Sarbinian viewpoint, the "divine" love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is a prototypical "dramatistic" role of the Hindu culture.

To put it in terms of the perspectives of Rosaldo (1984) and Lutz (1987), the Gosvāmīs' theory of emotion is a typical ethnotheory of emotion. The purpose of such theories is to help make sense of psychosocial phenomena that are an integral part of a specific culture. While the culture provides the context for the theory, the theory in turn tries to enlighten members of a culture while at the same time supporting and enriching that culture. Given the already established value in the Indian culture of differing ways of self-transformation, the Gosvāmīs adopted the *rasa* theorists' view of emotion as a tool in understanding and explaining how the devotees' lives are transformed in their journey on the "path of devotion." Let us see what sense it makes when examined from the vantage point of the constructionist theory of emotion.

Self–Other Relationships and the Self-transformation of the Devotee

In the previous chapter, I tried to interpret Advaita Vedāntic meditation in the light of George Kelly's approach to therapy. Here it would be appropriate to

examine the path of devotion in the light of the therapeutic applications of psychodynamic concepts and role theory. Seeing it from the vantage point of Freudian psychodynamics, the path of devotion could be seen as a systematic way of the *sublimation* of drives through repeated presentation of cultural ideals through a variety of literary and artistic modes. Even as Freud conceived of love, or Eros, as an all-encompassing human tendency with erotic love at its center, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas conceived of divine love as a cosmic force, while regarding romantic love as its highest form of expression. It may be remembered from Chapter 3 that Erik Erikson stressed the *mutuality* of social relations, and correspondingly focused on social emotions of trust, fidelity, love, and care as those that develop between the individual and his or her parents, comrades, leaders, partners, and children. Similarly, the path of devotion emphasizes an individual's relationships with the same sorts of alter roles, and seeks to direct them to an idealized role model. Heinz Kohut, working within the Freudian tradition, holds that for the healthy functioning of a personality it is essential to establish strong bonds of affiliation between self and "selfobjects." In simple terms, what he means is that every person needs other persons such as parents, caregivers, or loved ones who provide support, comfort, and reassurance in a sustained manner so as to become integral and essential parts of the self. Kohut (1984) sees deficits in the formation of strong bonds between self and selfobject as the basic cause of psychopathology, and his primary therapeutic strategy involves correcting such deficits by supplying empathic support (pp. 65–66). Seen from a Kohutian point of view, the path of devotion can be considered as a form of therapy that tries to create and establish deity as a selfobject that is most forgiving, loving, and reassuring, and always available to the devotee in bad times and good.

Given that the concept of role is central to self-transformation through devotion, the process of change in the devotee may be meaningfully compared with changes induced in the clients of role therapy. A form of role therapy that seems most closely comparable here is the "fixed-role therapy" developed by George Kelly (1955, Vol. 1, pp. 360–451). The main ideas behind Kelly's technique is to help a client to improve his ineffective or otherwise problematic ways of behaving in specific role contexts. The first step in this process is to ask the client to write a "self-characterization sketch" in which he describes his own typical ways of behaving in a problematic situation, such as in dealing with his demanding and unreasonable boss. Taking such a sketch as if it were a sketch or a script of a dramatic performance, the therapist and/or her associates assist the client in rewriting the client's sketch or script into an ostensibly more effective performance of the role. The client is first encouraged to try out the new script perhaps with the help of an "actor" to play the boss's role in the boss's typical fashion. After such "rehearsal," the client is encouraged to transfer this "new and improved" style of role play to the real-life situation for which it is designed with the hope of improvement in performance.

Given the many differences in their contexts, there are obvious limits to the comparability of the technique of fixed-role therapy with the path of devotion. There is no professional therapist who would help fabricate a custom-made role sketch for a fee,[23] although it is not inconceivable that in the Indian context a guru could replace the therapist in guiding his or her disciple. Regardless of this and other differences between the two models, there are nevertheless similarities at deeper levels. Interestingly, for instance, Kelly (1955, p. 373) suggested that in fixed-role therapy when the clients substitute a construct system suggested by the therapist in lieu of their habitual construct system, they should adopt it with a sense of "make-believe," or "let's pretend." This sounds much like Shrivatsa Goswami, whose words cited above that the devotee must adopt certain "conceits" in selecting a personally suitable mode of relationship with Kṛṣṇa. But once such a "conceit" is adopted, as in the case of a devotee choosing to be, say, a friend of Kṛṣṇa, a large variety of story lines are available in the numerous literary works that sketch the roles that various friends of Kṛṣṇa played. The devotee then could select one of the many modes of behavior, use it like a prescription by a Kellyian therapist, and try it out in real life.

Indeed, that is exactly what extraordinary devotees such as Mīrābāī and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa did in their lives. Both wore the clothes and lived and acted in real lives like Rādhā. The deep level of self-transformation that both devotees are said to have undergone makes sense in the same way in which role therapy is claimed to be effective. As their biographies indicate, both Mīrābāī and Ramakrishna were considered weird by many ordinary people around them, and both suffered much criticism and other problems for acting in such unusual ways. Most ordinary devotees are not prepared to go to such levels of serious involvement in their "conceits." Devotees who relate to their deities mainly by listening to their stories would presumably be influenced in the same way that people who listen to any kinds of stories. Like the secular cinemagoers and novel readers, their religious counterparts might vicariously learn from the punishment of villains and from the victories of heroes.

The Psychology of the Various Forms of Worship

It is commonplace that, generation after generation, large numbers of people in most societies follow varied ritualized forms of worship addressed to concrete or abstract symbols of divinity. Whether behavior in the form of rituals is thought of as meaningful or meaningless, crucial or trivial, from the point of view of "scientific" psychology, religious rituals seem to be voluntarily undertaken and apparently "enjoyed" by most who engage in them. Assuming that they are enjoyable to the performers, how could we account for the positive affect associated with religious rituals? Let me suggest an answer in the light of the concept of "flow" suggested by the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975). According to

Csikszentmihalyi, a variety of activities in work and play are conducive to "act with total involvement—as *flow*. In the flow state, action follows upon action according to an internal logic that seems to have no need for conscious intervention by the actor" (p. 36). Such activities are found in diverse situations, such as highly demanding work in surgical operations, in playing games like chess, as well as in recreational activities like rock climbing. Usually, says Csikszentmihalyi, such activities are "autotelic—that is, people seek flow primarily for itself, not for the incidental extrinsic rewards that may accrue from it" (p. 36). He says that play provides the flow experience par excellence, and points to extensive literature suggesting analogues of flow in "transcendental" and "religious" contexts, including collective ritual and "practically any other form of ritual experience" (p. 37). Singing songs, chanting the name of a god, collective dancing, and other such activities that are regular parts of the various forms of worship are superbly suited to create what Csikszentmihalyi has called the *flow* experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

The analogy of "play" in this context is certainly not far-fetched in the Hindu devotional context, where the activities of the entire universe have been thought of as God's "play" (*līlā*). More particularly, in the case of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the annual festival of 9 days of autumn (*nava rātri*) celebrated with stick dances (*dāṇḍiyā rās*) in Gujarat and elsewhere is particularly conducive to a flowing activity in which large numbers of men, women, and children can participate. In various parts of India, all sorts of play that Kṛṣṇa was supposed to be involved in Vraja are recreated: throwing color on each other (*holi*, *raṅga pañcamī*) in Northern and Western India, or climbing on human pyramids to "steal" butter from hanging pots in Bombay and vicinity, for instance. Like the notion of *play*, which is an integral part of the devotional tradition, the notion of *flow* is very much explicit and integral to the worship of Kṛṣṇa in particular. The notion of flow is intimately connected with the notion of aesthetic relish as *rasa*, which literally means "juice." Srivatsa Goswami (1982) expresses its significance succinctly as follows:

> Whether the flow of aesthetic experience be from the ocean to a small pond or vice versa, a connecting stream (dhārā) is required to conduct it. That stream is none other than Rādhā herself, the leader and exemplar of *gopīs*, and the two syllables in her name (*rādhā*) suggest how reversibly the stream (*dhā-rā*) flows. It is her grace that makes the flow or *rasa* possible, connecting the human and the divine in a liquid medium, submerging them in a world of *līlā* (play) (p. 76).

It is interesting to note that Goswami connects the experience of *flow* in devotion with that in *play*. As Csikszentmihalyi (1991) has pointed out, various types of individual as well as collective activities in play and recreation as well as work involve the experience of flow, which is generally pleasurable. From a psychological point of view outlined by Csikszentmihalyi (1991, pp. 178–183), certain kinds of activities allow action and awareness to merge so as to enable a person to concentrate intensely on the action and become temporarily oblivious to distrac-

tions arising from the surrounding. This could happen while playing a musical instrument or listening to music, while having sex, while being engaged in a religious ritual, or even while marching to a band. According to Csikszentmihalyi, "people in flow report a *loss of self-consciousness*" (1991, p. 185, emphasis original). As noted, aestheticians from Abhinavagupta in medieval India to Bullough in 20th-century England have noted that a temporary loss of self-consciousness is a common feature of all types of aesthetic experience. In moments of such loss of self-consciousness, the common worries and concerns of the ego are temporarily suspended, which seems to at least partly account for the pleasurable nature of aesthetic experience and "relishing" (*rasa*) of devotion.

It is important to remember that, as pointed out by Csikszentmihalyi (1993), an important condition for an activity or experience to be an enjoyable flow is that it must become autotelic, i.e., "worth doing for its own sake" (p. 179). This condition may be fulfilled in virtually any type of activity regardless of its nature and context. By the same token, it is possible to find and sometimes to deliberately introduce autotelic activities in a variety of programs, regardless of whether they are solitary or collective, religious or secular, sacred or profane. Autotelic activities could be part of a religious dance leading to a benign mystic trance, or of a military band leading troops to a genocidal war. Csikszentmihalyi (1993, Ch. 9) has suggested that throughout history, religious and ideological movements as diverse as Confucianism, Islam, and Jesuit Catholicism have devised activities guided by clear rules that have been enjoyable to millions, but their practice has been part of larger programs that have not always been benign. In discussing such movements Csikszentmihalyi has remarked that "no new cultural game is immune from exploitation" (p. 265), and there is no reason to assume that games devised in the name of Hindu gods may prove to be exceptional in this regard. At any rate, the joy derived from singing, dancing, and similar artistic expressions of devotion has been considered similar to, but not the same as, the ultimate bliss (*brahmānanda*). Moreover, devotional singing and dancing, which produce a pleasurable flow experience as do many other types of activities, are considered as secondary or lower (*gauṇī*) forms of *bhakti*. According to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava interpretation, the path of devotion aims at the continuation of the flow experience till it reaches the highest level of bliss, and the aim is to keep it at that level by being repeatedly reborn in the atmosphere of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. By contrast, Patañjali's Yoga expects to attain the state of bliss by stopping rather than perpetuating the flow of experience, and aims to prevent rebirth.

The Contrast between Bhakti and Yoga

The metaphor of flow is not unique to the path of devotion; it may be recalled that William James implied it in his idea of the "stream of consciousness." Vyāsa, a major commentator of Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms also used a similar expression,

"mind-river" (*citta nadī*), and spoke explicitly of the flowing nature of the processes of consciousness. However, the Yogic and devotional strategies of dealing with the flow of mental and physical activities are almost diametrically opposite. The devotional approach clearly seeks to facilitate the flow and keep it going by engaging the devotee in continuing physical and mental activities. On the contrary, the concentrative meditation of Yoga wants the yogi to minimize physical activity by sitting in a stable posture, then attenuate the flow by withdrawing the attention from the intentional object, and slow down the flow of ideas until it comes to a standstill. In the devotional approach, an attempt is made to keep as many sensory modalities active and constantly engaged as possible. In the *rāsa-līlā* dance, as in the dance of the Sufi dervishes, for instance, the devotees are surrounded by the sound of constant singing, chanting, and playing of musical instruments; kinesthetic senses are engaged in continuous movement of the whole body; the eyes are constantly engaged by brilliant colors of apparel worn by the dancers and by the decorations; and there is even incense burned and sweets ingested now and then to involve olfaction and gustation. By sharp contrast, silent environments are recommended for Yogic meditation, and the meditator must withdraw the senses from their objects. While in devotional worship the sensory experience is enriched and constantly fed, in Yogic meditation the senses are impoverished and starved.

Ironically, despite the differences just noted, both *bhakti* and Yoga aim at weakening and ultimately destroying the control of the narrowly conceived ego involved in or identified with practical goals of mundane life. Both try to help realize a transcendental self through disidentification with the ego. But, as Nalini Kanta Brahma (1993) correctly points out, "the realization can be had in two different ways, (i) by emphasizing the object-factor of consciousness, or (ii) by emphasizing the subject-factor. The Bhakti-mārga takes the first method and Yoga and Jñāna-mārga the second" (p. 242). In terms of affect, the strategy in devotion is to reach out to the object and increase the amount of affective energy cathected onto it. Yoga, on the contrary, requires the yogi to systematically decrease the intensity of affect through the cultivation of dispassionateness (*vairāgya*), and aims at complete decathexis. For the path of devotion, it does not matter which kind of emotion is directed toward the deity or object of devotion; even negative emotions such as fear or even hatred will bring the same result. According to the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇa, even those who approached God with lust, hatred, fear, or friendship have been absolved of their sins and have attained the same destination as His devotees insofar as their mind was completely absorbed in Him because of their intense emotions (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 7.1.30).[24] In his analysis of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, Noel Sheth (1984) notes that

> what matters is not the motivation, but the intensity of the emotion.... [B]oth the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa relate the hatred of Krishna [*sic*] with devotion: for both what is important is not the motivation, but the concentration on Krishna, which can thus be considered a form of meditation. (p. 153)

It is said that having learned from an oracle that Kṛṣṇa will be his nemesis, Kaṁsa felt extremely scared, and began to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Even as a result of such paranoia, the fear of Kṛṣṇa nevertheless helped Kaṁsa realize that God was ubiquitous, so the result is no different from the Vedāntist who realizes that Brahman is everything.

Notes

1. See Aristotle's *de Anima*, (403a2–403b19). The selection and translation used for the present study is from Calhoun and Solomon (1984, pp. 48–50; see also p. 43).
2. For an English translation of relevant selections from Sartre's *The Emotions: A Sketch of a Theory* and a discussion of his views of emotion, see Calhoun and Solomon (1984, pp. 244–250).
3. H. J. Bershady has recently published his own new translation of select essays by Scheler, including the one on the meaning of suffering (see Scheler, 1992, pp. 82–115).
4. Saint Tukārām's original Marathi words in poem No. 88 are:

   sukha pāhatā javāpāḍe ǀ
   duḥkha parvatā evaḍhe ǀ

   (see Tukārām, 1973, p. 13).
5. yato abhyudayaniḥśreyasasiddhiḥ sa dharmaḥ ǀ
   This definition of *dharma* is attributed to the Vaiśeṣika aphorisms (1.1.2) of Kaṇāda (see Kaṇāda, 1985).
6. For a detailed account of the Sāṅkhya system, see Larson and Bhattacharya (1987), or Larson (1969). For a Sanskrit text of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhya Karikā* and Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on the same, see S. Śāstrī (1940); for an English translation, see Larson (1969, pp. 255–277). Among the secondary sources, I have found S. N. Dasgupta's (1922/1975, Vol. 1, Ch. 7) chapter on Sāṅkhya Yoga in his *History of Indian Philosophy* most useful.
7. Vācaspati Miśra, a scholar known for valuable commentaries on several classical texts, is believed to have flourished in mid-9th century, CE. Among the several available editions of his commentary on the *Sākṅhya Kārikā*, called the *Sāṅkhya Tattva Kaumudī*, I have used the Sanskrit text edited by Śivanārāyaṇa Śāstrī (1940) and Hindi translation by R. S. Tripathi (1982).
8. The *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* (43–45) lists the following eight basic predispositions (*bhāvas*) that are said to accrue to an embodied person: predisposition for (1) meritorious action (*dharma*), (2) unmeritorious action (*adharma*), (3) knowledge or discrimination (*jñāna*), (4) ignorance or non-discrimination (*ajñāna*), (5) detachment (*vairāgya*), (6) attachment (*avairāgya*), (7) power of control (*aiśvarya*), and (8) impotence or lack of control (*anaiśvarya*).
9. Bharata lists the eight *rasas* in Chapter 6, stanza 15, followed by the list of basic emotions in stanza 17. See Bharatamuni (1926/1956, pp. 266–267). There are several translations with commentaries available on Chapters 6 and 7 of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Of these, I have consulted a Marathi translation with commentary by R. P. Kangle (1973).
10. This list appears in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Chapter 6, stanzas 18–21.
11. In preparing this section, I have consulted several works in Sanskrit, Marathi, and Hindi, along with a few publications in English. The works I found most useful in preparing my account of the generalization of emotion include a Marathi book on Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaprakāśa* by K. S. Arjunwadkar and A. Mangrulkar (1962), and a separate Hindi book on this topic by Premakant Tandan (1983). Tandan has discussed in some detail the similarity between *rasa* theorists' view of the generalization of emotions and Edward Bullough's notion of psychical distance.
12. I have discussed this issue of music as meditation with several prominent musicians currently

active in the concert circuit in northern India. While some musicians consider music part of their meditation and spiritual self-development, many others do not.

13. Viṣṇu, the sustainer, is one of the Hindu "Trinity," along with Brahmā (not the Brahman of Vedānta) the creator, and Śiva (also called Śaṅkara and numerous other names), the destroyer.
14. This is a sacred symbol widely used to represent ultimate reality or God. Considered as a compound of three characters in the Nāgarī script, *a*, *u*, and *m*, it is pronounced as "aum," or "om," and forms a common part of chanting in meditation and prayers.
15. The following are the words from Section 2 (*dakṣiṇa vibhāga*), subsection 5 (*vibhāvākhyā laharī*) of Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*. It lists five types of major devotional moods arranged in an order in increasing superiority:

    mukhyastu pañcadhā śāntaḥ prītiḥ preyāṁśca vatsalaḥ |
    madhuraścetyamī jñeyā yathāpūrvamanuttamāḥ |

    This stanza is numbered 88 at the beginning, and 115 at the end, in the text edited by Shyamadas (see Gosvāmī, 1981, p. 551).
16. In *Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu*, Rūpa Gosvāmī (1981, p. 562) characterizes the joy of *śānta bhakti*, or the devotional mood of the type of quietude, in the following words:

    prāyaḥ svasukhajātīyaṁ sukhaṁ syādatra yoginām |
    kintvātmasaukhyamaghanaṁ ghanastvīśamayaṁ sukham | | 5 | |

17. Here Goswami refers the reader to sections 110–111 of Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prītisandarbha*, mentioning page 67 of the text edited by Purīdāsa. In the text edited by Shriharidasa Shastri, the relevant ideas may be found particularly in the Hindi commentary on page 370.
18. This legend is mentioned in an unsigned article on Naraharī Sonār in the *Bhāratīya Saṁskṛtikośa*, the Marāṭhī encyclopedia of Indian culture edited by M. Joshi (1967, Vol. 4, p. 697).
19. An oft quoted verse *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reads as follows:

    śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ visṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pādasevanam |
    arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyaṁ sakhyamātmanivedanam | | (7.5.23).

    I am grateful to Dr. Nalinee Chapekar for helping me locate the source of this verse.
20. The translations are mine.
21. This idea resonates with Thomas à Kempis's notion of self-surrender mentioned in Chapter 2.
22. This is my paraphrase of the following words: ānandāce ḍohī ānanda taraṅga |
    ānandaci aṅga ānandāce | | (see Tukārām, 1973, p. 540, poem 3251).
23. It is rather remarkable that, as noted by Rychlak (1981, p. 742), George Kelly had never taken a fee from a client in over 30 years of therapeutic practice (see Kelly, 1969, p. 54).
24. The words in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that convey the idea as paraphrased by me here are as follows:

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6

SELF-AS-AGENT

The Psychology of Action

In this chapter, I shall discuss the relationship between self and action, or the notion of the self-as-agent. Human agency has been a most neglected topic in the mainstream of modern psychology throughout the century that has passed since the founding of the laboratories of Wundt and James. While several existentialists usually insisted, and humanists often implied, that human beings are free agents responsible for their actions, most behaviorists implied, and Skinner insisted, that human agency and freedom are an illusion. As noted in Chapter 2, since the late 1930s, psychology in North America turned to the study of personality, ignoring the ideas of persons as moral agents who could be held responsible for what they do or do not do. However, as the end of the 20th century is drawing near, human agency has started to emerge as a topic of serious study in psychology.

Are human beings free to act as they choose, or are they more or less coerced to act in particular ways by the unbreakable chain of causality? This dilemma has engaged some of the best minds through centuries of history of ideas in the West, and there are no signs of resolution in sight. As pointed out by Martin Hollis (1977), there are two competing views of human nature in contemporary social science literature. One view characterizes human beings as basically free, and the other characterizes human beings as determined. Hollis has dubbed the first view the *Autonomous Man* and its rival as the *Plastic Man*. In contemporary psychology, the advocates of these two positions are lodged in the separate camps of the humanists and the behaviorists. Watson, the founding father of behaviorism, clearly espoused the Plastic Man when he declared that, if given an opportunity to train babies right from birth, he could turn some into competent professionals and shape others into delinquents, by systematically manipulating their environments. Skinner expanded on this theme by suggesting in *Walden Two* that all of humanity could be brought under control so as to create a utopian society, and in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* he dismissed the notion of human agency. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers respected human

active in the concert circuit in northern India. While some musicians consider music part of their meditation and spiritual self-development, many others do not.

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Are human beings free to act as they choose, or are they more or less coerced to act in particular ways by the unbreakable chain of causality? This dilemma has engaged some of the best minds through centuries of history of ideas in the West, and there are no signs of resolution in sight. As pointed out by Martin Hollis (1977), there are two competing views of human nature in contemporary social science literature. One view characterizes human beings as basically free, and the other characterizes human beings as determined. Hollis has dubbed the first view the *Autonomous Man* and its rival as the *Plastic Man*. In contemporary psychology, the advocates of these two positions are lodged in the separate camps of the humanists and the behaviorists. Watson, the founding father of behaviorism, clearly espoused the Plastic Man when he declared that, if given an opportunity to train babies right from birth, he could turn some into competent professionals and shape others into delinquents, by systematically manipulating their environments. Skinner expanded on this theme by suggesting in *Walden Two* that all of humanity could be brought under control so as to create a utopian society, and in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* he dismissed the notion of human agency. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers respected human

freedom to the extent of insisting that even in the role of a therapist, he must be nondirective. The well-publicized debate between Rogers and Skinner (1956), the many strong reactions to Skinner's (1971) publication of *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, and the continuation of the debate through the recent years illustrate the persisting tension between the voluntarists and the determinists.[1]

Although the current debate has revived some of the age-old arguments on both sides of the issue, few psychologists have tried to trace the roots of the current views to the classical positions argued by a number of famous thinkers over the centuries that have informed the contemporary debate. Without the historical background, it is difficult to make sense of the extreme polarization of psychology between believers and nonbelievers in human freedom. When I look at the contemporary controversy from a traditional Indian viewpoint, I am most intrigued, for there is a conspicuous absence of a parallel debate in India even among those Indian thinkers who hotly debated related issues such as causality over the centuries. It is not strange, however, that psychologists are not very much interested in tracing the historical background of the issue, for many of them share the positivist disregard of history. Like Auguste Comte, the father of positivism, many a modern psychologist has considered old ideas as obsolete and unworthy of our attention. Skinner (1974, p. 167), in keeping with the positivist disdain for ancient ideas, repeatedly suggests that belief in forces internal to the organism is a vestige of the animistic thinking typical of "primitive" people that should be immediately discarded by the *science* of psychology. Although many good textbooks of history of psychology are available today, most of them fail to give a clear account of the origin and development of the current positions for and against human agency.

Against this background, I shall try to present in the next several pages a brief reconstruction of the historical debate in the West on the freedom–determinism issue. There is a long history of debate over the freedom–determinism issue in Western tradition.[2] I cannot pretend to discuss this issue in all its complexities; I must restrict the scope of discussion and select some aspects/ideas over others. The selection must inevitably be arbitrary at least to some degree, and here it is slanted toward the context and purpose of the present inquiry. In the first part of the chapter, although the focus will be on Western thought, I shall try to identify clear parallels as well as sharp contrasts between Indian and Western ideas where appropriate. In the second part, I shall focus on some relevant approaches from the Indian tradition.

Views of Self-as-Agent in Western Thought and Some Parallels from India

In the Western tradition, the origin of the deterministic position is often traced to Democritus (ca. 460–370 BCE), the ancient Greek thinker who held that everything that happens in the universe is strictly controlled by laws that combine or separate atoms of which things are made. Epicurus (341–270 BCE), who followed Democritus in holding an atomist view of the world and a materialist concept of the soul, could not accept the fatalist implication of this view. Assuming that the ordinary experience of freedom is not a mere illusion, he suggested that mind atoms occasionally "swerve" here and there, rather than being absolutely and totally determined by other atoms colliding with them. One can see the origin here of the differing conceptions of determinism: one that admits to something like "chance," thereby loosening the hold of external forces implied in the other, more strict form of determinism.

Determinism, whether conceived in either a strict or loose way, is inextricably connected with the notion of causality. Indeed, determination of events is most usually understood as *causal* determination. The basic idea is that every event is the result of a cause, not a mere happenstance. In other words, the universe is a cosmos, not a chaos. This idea is implicit in many systematic worldviews, scientific or commonsense, ancient or modern, Eastern or Western. As we saw in Chapter 3, in the Advaita Vedāntic worldview, the doctrine of karma assumes causal relationships among human actions and their consequences as part of a cosmic order, and the belief in this doctrine is common to the otherwise diverse systems of Indian thought in Buddhism, Hinduism, as well as Jainism. In the Western tradition, Aristotle pioneered the systematic conceptualization of causality. Over the centuries, his views invited considerable following and elaboration, as well as strong criticism and debate, so as to decisively shape the diverse contemporary conceptions of causality, determinism, and human agency.

Aristotle's Four "Causes"

Aristotle's famous notions of the four varieties of "causes" arose from his search for reasons why something is the way it is. Basically, they are answers to the following questions in regard to any event or phenomenon: What is it? (formal cause); of what substance is it made? (material cause); by which agency? (efficient cause); and to what end? (final cause) (Winston, 1985). The distinction among these four types is based on Aristotle's complex notions of "matter" and "form." Although these terms are currently in wide usage, their contemporary meanings are different from their Aristotelian counterparts. Aristotle's discussion of "reasons why" (aitiá) in *Physica* (Book II.3), *Metaphysica* (Book A.3),[3] and other writings is somewhat ambiguous, and has prompted several alternative interpretations by scholars. As noted by Winston (1985), Aristotle's categories have no exact equivalents in current terminology, since the ancient terms have undergone considerable transformation through history. It will be useful to first explain Aristotle's views with the help of examples of each category from his own writings before accounting for their influence on the current context.

As noted, the Aristotelian notion of formal cause was invoked while trying to answer the question "what is it?" with reference to a given event, phenomenon, or object. If the answer to such a question is "brick" or "statue," it implies a category in which we place the object in our understanding. What we mean thereby is not only the pattern or shape of the object, but its essence. In the case of the brick, for instance, it could be the use to which it can be put, such as building a wall, by virtue of its shape and other properties. Aristotle gives the example of the ratio of 1 : 2 as being the most essential feature of a musical octave, and calls it the octave's "formal cause." He refers to matter and form in a relative way such that, while clay is said to be the material cause of the brick, brick is the material cause of the wall, wall that of the house, and so on. The clay is said to actualize its potential in the "form" of the brick, the brick into the form of the wall, and so on. A typical Aristotelian example of efficient cause is the builder as efficient cause of a house. It clearly implies some external agency, action, or force that brings about a change in something into its present state. By contrast, the final cause is the end result, or purpose, "for the sake of which" some change may be brought about. Thus, health is the goal for the sake of which one exercises, or beautification of a living room is the purpose for which a statue may be sculpted, and so on.

Several psychologists (e.g., Griffore, 1978; Rychlak, 1979; Moore, 1984) have pointed out how current conceptualizations of causality parallel Aristotelian "reasons why" to varying degrees. According to Moore (1984, p. 88), an explanation similar to Aristotle's *material cause* is used when reference is made to the genetic makeup or physiological structure of the organism. A similar approach was implied when Hempel (1935/1949) tried to explain a toothache in terms of decayed tissue in the gums. In general we can say that a mental phenomenon is explained in terms of a material cause by trying to reduce it to its physical substratum or concomitant. Take for instance the explanation of dream states in terms of concomitant rapid eye movements (REM), or of associative learning in terms of neural connections in the brain.

The notion of *efficient cause* is most commonly implied in the concept of the stimulus. Skinner (1953, p. 47) describes the stimulus as an external agent that controls a behavioral response. In *Contingencies of Reinforcement*, Skinner (1969) explains the term "stimulus" as originating from the Latin term for "goad," (i.e., a pointed rod used to urge on an animal), and calls it "the action of the environment" (p. 3). Skinner (1969) adds that Jacques Loeb's research on tropisms demonstrates the ways in which "the environment somehow or other *forced* the organism to behave" (p. 3, emphasis original). Such characterization of stimuli clearly fits the Aristotelian category of the efficient cause.

The notion of *formal cause* as described by Aristotle is complex, and its correspondence with contemporary ideas is particularly difficult to establish. Nevertheless, it should be clear that formal cause involves explaining something by pointing to its essence, as illustrated in his example of the ratio 1 : 2 as the formal cause of an octave. After all, we *define* an octave by a specific relationship between notes (measured by the length of string required to produce them, for instance). This example prompts me to suggest that a psychologist uses something very similar to formal cause when he or she tries to explain or understand the behavioral pattern: periodic swings in mood by which a patient's behavior is understood as belonging to the "manic–depressive" category by definition. Explanations involving typologies and traits (authoritarianism, introversion, etc.) imply basically the same sort of idea. Another aspect of formal cause follows from Aristotle's view that matter has *potential* that may *actualize* in its "form"—like an acorn actualizing its potential in the form of an oak. Biological approaches to human development, such as Piaget's and Erikson's, can be said to invoke basically this Aristotelian type of explanation insofar as they explain behavior in terms of the unfolding of a pattern that is "built in" to the organic structure right from start. The Maslowian self-actualization model has a more than accidental correspondence with the Aristotelian idea of the actualization of potentials.[4]

The *final cause* is much easier to express in modern terminology, since its meaning has not changed considerably through the ages. Now, as in the past, it means *purpose*, and involves a teleological explanation. Aristotle thought that it was important to account for any phenomenon in terms of as many of the four "reasons why" as may be relevant in its context. However, he was viewed as having emphasized teleological explanations over explanation in terms of the other three types of reasons. As we shall soon see, it was Francis Bacon's sharp criticism of teleological explanations in understanding nature that brought final causes into serious disrepute. Except for the existentialists and the humanists who defiantly reject a psychology based on the natural science model, most psychologists treat teleological explanations as well as the doctrine of free will with either indifference or sheer contempt.

Aristotle's ideas are important for psychology today because he laid out the framework for the discussion of causality for the Western intellectual tradition. The concept of human agency is inextricably connected with a view of causality in general and with teleological explanations in particular. Since the highly differing views of human agency that prevail in contemporary thought have been shaped by the twists and turns in the history of the concept of causality, I shall sketch prominent landmarks in that history in the remaining portion of the first half of this chapter. I shall introduce parallel ideas from Indian thought wherever relevant in this discussion, and will turn to Indian conceptions of human agency in the second half of this chapter.

St. Augustine: Psychology's Links with Theology

In the Christian tradition, God has always been viewed as the all-good, omniscient, and omnipotent creator of the universe. Within the first couple of centuries of the Christian era, when increasing numbers of followers were trying to understand the apostolic teachings, many vexing questions regarding the coher-

ence of the teachings arose. For instance, if God is all-good and omnipotent, why did He create a world beset with famine, plague, treachery, and wars that led to untold human suffering? In other words, who is responsible for evil? Mani (or Manichaeus), a Persian who declared himself a prophet in 242 CE, suggested that evil is the doing of Satan, not God. While this suggested solution to the problem of evil affirms God's goodness, it compromises His omnipotence. St. Augustine (354–430) set out to defend the Christian doctrine against this Manichean heresy. A way of doing this was to assign to human beings freedom of will, so that the human beings can be held responsible for their sin and its consequences, and God is absolved of any responsibility for the pitiful human condition. In *City of God* (Book XI, Section.22), Augustine (426/1960) declared: "... the soul which has shown itself capable of being altered for the worse by its own will, and of being corrupted by sin ... is not a part of God, nor of the same [good] nature of God, but is created by Him, and is far different from its Creator" (p. 366).

While the existence of evil seems incompatible with the belief in God's all-good nature, His omniscience seems irreconcilable with the notion of human free will. If God knows everything at all times, he must have also foreknown everything, good or bad, that his creations would ever do. If God knows in advance what I shall do, the future course of events is unavoidable, and I would never do other than what He has foreseen me doing. The Roman author Cicero (106–143 BCE) had clearly recognized the fatalist implications of the doctrine of complete divine foreknowledge (predictability) of human behavior, and denied it so as to preserve the idea of free will. Augustine, too, wished to make men free, but unlike Cicero he did not want to be sacrilegious by denying foreknowledge. In *City of God* (Book V, Section 10), while taking issue with Cicero, Augustine (426/1950) flatly declared: "He, whose foreknowledge is infallible, foreknew not that fate, or fortune, or something else would sin, but that the man himself would sin, who, if he wills not, sins not" (p. 158).

Augustine understood very well the paradox involved in simultaneously affirming the doctrines of free will and foreknowledge of actions, and he tried to make them compatible. What was his argument in defense of such compatibility? As noted by W. T. Jones (1969, Vol. 2, p. 99), Augustine's argument was based primarily on the eternal and immutable nature of God. When God is characterized as eternal, it is implied that He is not a temporal creature like human beings; God knows everything that happens, but not before or after the events as we human beings do. Indeed, terms like "before" and "after" cannot be applied to divine considerations, according to Augustine. In *Confessions* (XI.12), he makes this point in his typical rhetorical style: "How, then, shall I respond to him who asks, 'What was God doing *before* He made heaven and earth?' I do not answer, as a certain one is reported to have done facetiously ... 'He was preparing hell ... for those who pry too deep' " (398/1955, p. 253) Without going into details of this issue, we may simply note that Augustine's "theological" perspective on the

nature of human action was linked with issues like God's creatorship of the world and the need to reconcile His goodness with the existence of evil. As we shall presently note, Śaṅkara's discussion of the nature of human action became enmeshed with the same sort of issues—a remarkable parallel given the historical and geographical gap that separated them.

In his commentary on the aphorisms of Bādarāyaṇa, Śaṅkara (1980, 2.1.34–37),[5] discusses the dilemma arising from the common observation that all creatures are not equal; some are happy, some unhappy, and still others inbetween. Neither the Advaita Vedāntist nor his critic could deny this fact. But the latter poses a question: Is not God, who created them all, open to the charge of partiality and cruelty toward them? As noted in Chapter 3, Śaṅkara (1980, 2.1.34–35) says no, because happiness or misery results justly from the creatures' own good or bad actions. Like the rain that does not favor some creatures over others, God treats all creatures with equality. That rice and barley seeds grow into different types of plants is no fault of the rain. Similarly, that angels, people, or animals enjoy or suffer differently is not the fault of the Lord, but simply a just consequence of their distinctive past experience and action (*karma*). But then the critic might ask: Who prompted the creatures to act in different ways in the first place? No one, replies the Advaita Vedāntist; the cycle of action and its consequences (*saṁsāra*) is without a beginning (*anādi*).

Here, as in the case of St. Augustine's views, we need not examine how justifiable the arguments are or how convincing their worldviews are. As part of a discourse in psychology rather than theology, we can take their views as but different ways of accomplishing a common life task: the cognitive construction of reality—a quest that raises cosmic issues and tries to answer them within a broad and internally consistent framework. From this standpoint, we may simply note the remarkable parallels in their respective ways of "world building." Both start with a common premise, namely a belief in God and his goodness, although their conceptions of God are in some ways worlds apart. Within this limited range of commonality, both are confronted with precisely the same dilemma: how to reconcile the existence of evil with God's unquestionably good nature, regardless of the fact that they both view evil as well as God's creation of it somewhat differently. In psychological terms, both are beset with a common problem: *cognitive dissonance*. Like the subjects in Festinger's (1957) experiments who had encountered contradictory beliefs, these thinkers try to make their views internally consistent. In doing so they adopt remarkably similar solutions: both invoke the notion of timelessness—of God in Augustine's case, and that of the cycle of actions and their consequences in Śaṅkara's. Both try to protect "core constructs" (belief in the good God) while allowing peripheral cognitive constructs to change. In modern psychological terminology, this core construct is what is called the "just world hypothesis" (Lerner, 1980).

Lerner's research, like the bulk of research in modern psychology, is based

largely on the behavior of college sophomores recruited for the typical psychology experiments. The comparison of young students in modern institutions of secular science with revered intellects like St. Augustine and Śaṅkara might appear sacrilegious to the devout followers of each. But here we may take a clue from Piaget, who dares to compare ordinary children with serious philosophers, and demonstrates parallels in their thinking about issues like time, space, and causality, albeit at different levels of intellectual sophistication. Viewed from a cognitive psychological viewpoint, both St. Augustine and Śaṅkara may be said to have based their worldviews on the "just world hypothesis," even as psychology's sophomore subjects often do. Here, we may ask: If indeed there are universal human tendencies to construct internally consistent worldviews and to view the world as morally just, are psychologists devoid of such tendencies?

Many psychologists would be loath to compare their own "scientific" theories with the worldviews of their sophomore subjects on the one hand and of "religious" figures on the other. Questions like "Will justice be ultimately established in the world?" would seem to be irrelevant to the value-free enterprise of psychology. Many of us just assume that we have nothing to do with theologians of any ilk. Many of us would like to believe that, in this postmodern era, we have left behind the hot and messy issues of God and His relation with the world; but have we? Not quite, for many psychologists as well as scientists in various fields seem to practice value-free science while at work, but switch to their value commitments and religious beliefs while at their homes, churches, or temples. As we have noted before, prominent psychologists like Skinner and Erikson seem to have set aside their religious inclinations during their academic life and expressed them in their postretirement phase. In connection with the issue on hand it would be useful to note Skinner's own words in his autobiography: "My early religious experience was important.... I see that the point of [*Beyond Freedom and Dignity*] could be summarized as a scientific defense of the radical dissenting Protestantism of early 19th-century England" (Skinner, 1983, p. 402). Skinner further clarifies that he "formulated 'responsibility' within a determined system of behavior," following the footsteps of the Protestant theologian Jonathan Edwards's attempt to reconcile the doctrine of "predestination with man's moral responsibility" (p. 403). These words are important not because they seem to expose the "hidden theological agenda" lurking behind the secularist facade of a prominent scientist, but because they show how both religious and scientific worldviews are commonly concerned with the issue of freedom–determinism, and that scientists are not as insulated from the theological perspectives as is commonly held.

Francis Bacon: The Natural Science View of Knowledge

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) recognized and deepened the medieval distinction between two ways of knowing: one through the words of the Lord, and another

through His works. The former of course refers to the interpretation of the scripture (Bible), and the latter to the study of Nature. During the medieval times, followers of the Hebraic tradition such as St. Augustine studied the scriptures, while the followers of the Hellenic tradition were devoted to the writings of Aristotle. Bacon, like Galileo after him, emphasized "reading the book of nature" more than interpreting God's words in His Book. More specifically, he favored studies aimed at commanding nature to act in accordance with one's desire over those that aimed primarily at overcoming the opponent in argument with skillful use of words. Moreover, he thought that human beings, who were created in His image by God and were like angels in being endowed with the capacity to reason, also had been endowed with the right of "dominion over Nature." We could exercise this right through the understanding of Nature's laws by means of our capacity to reason. Bacon has rightfully earned a place of pride in the history of civilization by inspiring the study of nature by direct observation and experiment. When Newton enunciated his famous laws, he was following Bacon's path; he thought it was important to discover the laws that the Lord God had laid down for nature to obey. Bacon had a strong sense of legitimacy in the exercise of power over nature because he was convinced that it was to be used exclusively for "the relief of man's [*sic*] estate" (Bacon, 1859a, p. 294). Moreover, he seriously and sincerely meant that the business of discovery and use of scientific knowledge was to be open to the whole of humanity and not just particular communities. Bacon clearly espoused the true spirit of science.

There is absolutely no doubt that the Baconian project has been highly successful and has benefited a vast portion of humanity. The fact that scientific knowledge often has been promoted and used for exclusive and even belligerent goals of particular nations is a related but separate issue. At any rate, the enormous prestige legitimately earned by the natural sciences is primarily due to their success in helping devise technologies for controlling diseases, mass manufacturing of useful products, and other benign and benevolent uses in the service of humanity. By comparison, the humanities and *interpretive* sciences—history, philosophy, literary criticism, law, and the like—do not directly help improve human health and prosperity as do science and technology. As such, the humanities have been inadvertently reduced to a significantly lower level of prestige when compared to natural sciences. It is against this background that we can understand the concerted effort of many modern psychologists to not only fashion their discipline on the lines of the natural sciences, but also to dissociate it from the humanities.

Bacon's emphasis on discovering the laws of nature and their use in the control of events in nature has obvious implications for the issue of freedom versus determinism. Bacon clearly believed in the *causal determination* of natural events, and he even implied a "strict" determinism. Thus, in *The Great Instauration*, he said: "the chain of causes cannot by any force be loosed or broken, nor can nature

be commanded except by being obeyed" (Bacon, 1620/1860), p. 32).[6] If all events in nature were determined by ironclad laws, how could we control them in a desired manner without somehow loosening their operation? Commanding nature by obeying her clearly involves a paradox, for how could one command and obey at the same time? This paradox is essentially no different from the paradox theologians face in reconciling Providence with human will, except that the scientist ascribes power of control to Nature rather than God. As we shall soon see, Hobbes, who followed in the footsteps of Bacon, showed how determinism and freedom could be compatible within a naturalist framework. Before we turn to Hobbes's ideas, however, it is necessary to consider Bacon's attack on Aristotle's views of causality, since it deeply influenced the development of scientific thought, and continues to influence psychological thought to this day.

Anthony Quinton (1980) has poignantly described the thrust of Bacon's criticism of the Aristotelian view of causality: "Bacon is rightly understood to have been an inveterate and influential enemy of the doctrine of final causation" (p. 44). The main point of Bacon's attack is best given in his oft-quoted words from *The Advancement of Learning* (Bacon, 1605/1859a):

> For the handling of final causes, mixed with the rest in physical inquiries, hath intercepted the severe and diligent inquiry of all real and physical causes, and given men the occasion to stay upon these satisfactory and specious causes, to the great arrest and prejudice of further discovery. (pp. 357–358)

By citing Aristotle's own examples of final cause such as "the leaves of trees are for protecting the fruit," Bacon forcefully showed their futility and suggested that we would be better off following Democritus than Aristotle. Bacon seemed to love shooting at Aristotle at every possible opportunity, but he reserves his most caustic comments for the concept of final cause. The style and force of Bacon's writings not only undermined the Aristotelian notion of final cause, but also inspired a successful enterprise of scientific inquiry into efficient causes. Bacon made it clear that final cause explanations were useless only in the study of physical causes, not in "metaphysic," thereby meaning what we now call the human sciences. Indeed, he thought that final causes were just fine "within their own province." But modern psychology in its behavioristic phase tried to expel final causes from explanation of human behavior altogether.

While Bacon's ban on final causes was clearly limited to the understanding of events in nature, his plan of action seemed similarly restricted to domination over nature, presumably excluding human beings. Bacon derived sanction for this enterprise from the prevailing Christian worldview. According to the Biblical story of creation, God created man in his own image and granted him "dominion over the earth" (Genesis, 1.26). So, control of nature was man's birthright. William Leiss (1972, pp. 12–19) has shown how several related developments in the history of European thought led to a progressive establishment of complete mastery over

not only the entire nonhuman world—plants in the forests, animals and fish of the land and sea—but also over all human beings other than oneself. This theme of mastery has been an important part of the collective agenda of the European civilization under the guiding theme of "progress" (Bury, 1932/1960). This "progress" was to culminate in a utopian society portrayed variously since the period of Enlightenment by St. Thomas More (1516/1965) in *Utopia*, Francis Bacon (1627/1859b) in *New Atlantis*, and, among several others, by B. F. Skinner (1948/1969) in *Walden Two*.

Bacon's writings have been widely—and rightly—recognized as having been influential in the development of modern science. It is equally important to recognize the influence of several allied themes of his teaching: his slogan "knowledge is power"; the use of the power of scientific knowledge to control events in nature; the tacit understanding of knowledge as the discovery of the laws of nature, as opposed to self-knowledge; a pervasively extraspective stance turned away from the inner world of meanings and intentions; the implicit separation of human beings and their environment; and the eventual extension of the sphere of control to include *other* human beings. Skinnerian psychology clearly illustrates the deep influence of all these themes.

The implications of these themes in understanding self-as-agent, the specific topic under consideration, should now be clear. In the Skinnerian model, as in the Baconian, the scientist's mandate to control the rest of the world is taken as an unquestionable birthright. While Bacon had turned to God for the scientist's authority to control nature, Skinner did not have to go to Him; over the centuries science had attained a legitimacy of its own while secularizing itself along the way. The positive contributions of science—the use of electricity, vaccines against deadly diseases, and countless others—have convinced the public that science does indeed work in the service of benign and benevolent human goals. It must be remembered, however, that scientific knowledge is useless unless it is put in the hands of a purposeful agent. As noted in Chapter 2, even if we set aside the question of *who* will control *whom*, no utopian dream would come true if *nobody* was free to choose among alternative courses of action. How could someone like Skinner, who intends to use technology in an ambitious project, be such a vociferous enemy of the doctrines of human agency and freedom? How could one make sense of such a grand irony?

It seems to me that the answer to this question lies partly in the *extraspective and impersonal stance* ingrained in the worldview of science based on the Baconian model. When this stance becomes entrenched, one is turned away from the inner world, gradually learning to neglect one's "self" along with the feelings, wishes, and "will" that it harbors. This is exactly opposite to St. Augustine's stance of looking "inward" with a deeply personal focus. The enterprise of knowing in Baconian "science" becomes equated with studying the world "out there." In the capacity of a scientist, I cannot include myself as part of the world;

the scientist must somehow remain outside or "above" the world he or she studies. Although I must admit to myself as being a part of the human collectivity, as a scientist I study "them," never "myself." Such a stance is most clearly reflected in the work of Max Meyer's (1922) "psychology of the *other-one*," mentioned before. The desire for control combined with the neglect of the inner self and a focus on "other ones" conspires to produce what David Bakan (1965) has called the "mystery–mastery complex in contemporary psychology." What this means is that the goal of exercising lordship over nature becomes paramount, while at the same time turning the "self" into a perpetual mystery.

It is important to remember that Bacon conceived of science as a *public* enterprise. After all, the insights of science would be of no use to humanity if they remained the private property of a few. Moreover, since science involved the laborious work of collecting facts, true benefits of such labor could not accrue unless each science added to a common repository, such as a library, where they could accumulate generation after generation and be open to use in the interest of humanity at large.[7] The Baconian model of science turns the scientist into an investigator who diligently collects "facts" devoid of any personal meaning, and adds them to a publicly held cumulative record of the world as it is (or at least is supposed to be) in actuality. Nobody can deny the immeasurable benefits of a publicly open character of scientific knowledge, nor can we ignore the importance of keeping personal meanings out of the domain of science. However, this does not mean that the person who plays the role of the scientist is a disembodied soul or a robot. In actuality, every scientist is driven by personal motives in doing her or his job, although in the capacity of scientist she or he must keep these motives out of the business of investigation so as to avoid the resulting biases. As scientists, psychologists must learn to ignore and disregard the role of purpose underlying their own behaviors. But does that mean that they should ignore or deny the purposefulness of behavior among their subjects as most behaviorists (except Tolman, 1932/1967) did? Seen from the vantage point of the history of ideas, the behaviorist denial of human agency is meaningfully relatable to Bacon's rejection of final cause as an explanatory principle. There are of course several sources of influence other than Bacon that shaped the Zeitgeist of contemporary psychology. Important among them is Thomas Hobbes. While Bacon did not deny purpose and final cause in human beings, Hobbes explicitly denied it entirely, whether in the outer world of nature or in the inner world of human minds.

Thomas Hobbes: The Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism within a Physicalist Worldview

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) followed a materialistic view of the world along the lines of Democritus, taking the motion of particles as the centerpiece of his model. In Democritus's view, the soul was composed of atoms, and thoughts (*eidola*) arose in it by way of the motion of particles induced by atoms emanating

from objects in the outer world. In the same vein, Hobbes conceived of mental events as "phantasms," i.e., motions of the tiny particles of the brain. Thus, what appears in the stream of consciousness as an intention to act, i.e., volition or "will," is but a motion of some atoms in the brain that sets in under the impact of outside atoms moving along their trajectories. Although such motions in the brain are minute, they can trigger motions in the whole body, even as a few falling rocks often set off huge avalanches. Thus, intentions for action are but links in an endless causal chain in which inert atoms transmit momentum from one to the next.

Thus, Hobbes offers a thoroughly mechanistic view of human behavior where only efficient causes operate. Working in an atmosphere charged with the powerful notions of Francis Bacon, Hobbes tried to go beyond Bacon in dispelling Aristotelian final causes not only from physics, but also from metaphysics. In *Elements of Philosophy* (Part II.10), Hobbes (1655/1839) declared: "A *final cause* has no place but in such things as have sense and will; and this also I shall prove hereafter to be an efficient cause" (p. 132; emphasis original).[8] Hobbes was not a physicist committed to working with push–pull mechanisms in the laboratory, but rather was a man deeply involved in social and political life. Moreover, he was a "political scientist" (to put it in contemporary terminology); he authored *Leviathan*, a classic volume that presents a distinctive political theory. Writing in the European tradition of political thought, Hobbes (in *Leviathan*, Ch. 21; 1651/1962, p. 163) quotes Aristotle's words that note how democracy ensures individual liberties more than any other form of government. An Englishman raised in the political ethos shaped by the Magna Carta, the Charter of Liberties, Hobbes recognized the importance of parliamentary democracy, of being able to buy and sell in a free market, of freedom to speak, and of even disobeying a despot. Nevertheless, having witnessed inhumanity of man to man under conditions of civil war, Hobbes was equally in favor of (an ostensibly benevolent) monarchy. Caught between the value of liberty on the one hand and that of a sovereign's peacekeeping rule on the other, he tried to reconcile liberty of the individual with state control. Moreover, he extended conceptual reconciliation of opposing principles beyond the sphere of politics by suggesting the compatibility of freedom of will with determinism at a cosmic level. Hobbes tried to accomplish this through a radical redefinition of the concepts of freedom and will.

In *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society* (Vol. 2, Ch. 9), Hobbes (1651/1841) wrote:

> *Liberty*, that we may define it, is nothing else but *an absence of the lets and hindrances of motion*; as water shut up in a vessel is therefore not at liberty, because the vessel hinders it from running out; which, the vessel being broken, is made *free*. And every man hath more or less *liberty*, as he hath more or less space in which he employs himself: as he hath more *liberty*, who is in a large [space], than he that is kept in a closed prison. (p. 120; emphasis original)

According to some historians of Western philosophy, Hobbes's views have proved to be highly influential in shaping 20th-century conceptions of freedom and

determinism. The following quote from Richard Taylor (1967) succinctly interprets the historical significance of Hobbes's ideas:

> Generations of philosophers, while for the most part rejecting Hobbes's materialism, have nevertheless followed him in his view of liberty.... In the twentieth century Moritz Schlick, A. J. Ayer, and many others have made the point that freedom is not opposed to causation but to constraint. The significance of these ideas is enormous, for they appear to offer the means of once and for all reconciling the apparent opposition between determinism and freedom, thus dissolving the whole problem of free will. Many philosophers are still convinced that this insight is entirely correct and that there really is therefore no problem of free will. (Vol. 2, p. 365)

The influence of Hobbes's ideas on contemporary psychology should be obvious. Note, for instance, the following words of Skinner (1974): " 'Freedom' usually means the absence of restraint or coercion, but more comprehensively it means lack of any prior determination" (p. 54). While clearly echoing Hobbes's ideas, Skinner does not refer to their source. I have met many psychologists who hold similar views but are oblivious to their historical origins.

Notwithstanding the immense popularity of Hobbes's views, however, the problem of free will is far from resolved, or even "dissolved" by simply declaring it to be a pseudoissue. The main problem with the idea of freedom-as-lack-of-obstruction is that it robs the concept of volition of two essential properties: first, the *anticipation of a future outcome* "for the sake of which" a certain course of action is chosen; and second, its putative power to *produce* a desired change. Stripped of these crucial connotations, the Hobbesian notion of freedom loses its distinctively human significance, particularly in understanding moral behavior, and therefore personhood.

As suggested by Taylor in his words just quoted, it is of course possible to accept Hobbes's view of freedom without endorsing his materialist thesis. However, a physicalistic worldview, which is clearly prevalent among many psychologists, buttresses determinism. Ever since Isaac Newton formulated his famous laws of motion, physicists have been able to describe and predict a widening variety of natural events with increasing degrees of precision. Enthused by the predictive power of Newtonian physics, the French mathematician Pierre Laplace (1749–1827) suggested that, if we can amass a sufficient amount of information, it will be, in principle, possible to work out a grand formula according to which every single event in the future could be accurately predicted, and everything in history could be "postdicted." Laplace's promise begins to look increasingly viable as more and more satellites are placed in space to collect vast amounts of information about earthly and celestial objects, and as increasingly powerful supercomputers are designed to crunch astronomical amounts of information in trillionths or zillionths of a second. The principle of *indeterminacy* would appear to tarnish Laplace's grand design, but only marginally. For, as noted by Sir Karl Popper (1966), "... physical indeterminism ... is merely a doctrine than *not all* events in

the physical world are predetermined with absolute precision.... [I]t does not entail the view that 'there are events without causes' ..." (p. 9; emphasis original). At any rate, whatever be the limits to predictability imposed by the principle of indeterminacy, the popularity of the physicalist worldview seems to grow with advances in scientific knowledge, which in turn seems to tighten the grip of determinism.

In his essay *Of Clouds and Clocks*, Karl Popper (1966) has pointed out that a physicalist worldview implies the metaphor of the universe as a huge automaton or clockwork rather than a hazy cloud floating in windy skies. Human beings are but cogwheels or subautomata in a vast, complex machinery. The view of human bodies as automata can be traced to at least as far back as Descartes, a junior contemporary of Hobbes. This view was elaborated by de La Mettrie (1709–1751) in the 18th century, and is celebrated by computer scientists in the 20th. With the increasing sophistication of computerized robots, it is becoming more and more difficult to tell the difference between an android and a human being. The famous "Turing test" challenges us to tell the human response apart from a computer's response to the same question, and it is no longer easy to pass such a test. Under these conditions, the computer is becoming the most cherished model for the understanding of human behavior. The computer, especially the self-programming variety that is able to learn from its past mistakes and change its course accordingly, is the most appealing model for human behavior. This "internal" factor of self-regulation is a significant change from the clockwork model, and we shall return to this issue later in this chapter. Here, let us note that according to the Hobbesian physicalist model, no changes occur except due to *external* conditions impinging on the individual in an "efficient cause" fashion.

Popper (1966, p. 11) has pointed out an important implication of such a model: A physicist with sufficiently detailed information about the physical condition of an artist or author's body and its surroundings could, at least in theory, predict precisely where the author's pen would strike the paper or the artist's brush would touch the canvas. Given the specific physical conditions, the author or the artist could not have done otherwise, and as such, they could not *create* something new; their bodies could only be conduits for the physical forces pushing in a totally predictable manner. Moreover, as pointed out by Popper (1966).

> [W]e are deceiving ourselves ... whenever we believe that there are such things as arguments or reasons which make us accept determinism. Or in other words, physical determinism is a theory which, if it is true, is not arguable, since it must explain all our reactions, including what appear to us as beliefs based on arguments, as due to *purely physical conditions*. (p. 11; emphasis original)

It should now be clear why Popper has called physical determinism a nightmare. It may be argued that any doctrine that views human behavior as being strictly and completely determined by external factors leads to the same nightmarish conclusions; it does not matter whether these external factors are physical forces or other

efficient causes, or various deities of a pantheistic worldview, or almighty God. In Hobbes's own lifetime, Descartes believed in both deity determinism as well as physical determinism, but tried to escape from the fatalistic implications of such determinism by assigning the power of choice to an "internal" agency, the *soul*. Descarte's views have had great influence on modern thought, and as such deserve close examination.

René Descartes: Volition and the Mind–Body Dualism

In the Western tradition, the distinction between body and soul dates back to the ancient Greek as well as Hebrew worldviews. Pythagoras (ca. 582–507 BCE) made a sharp distinction between the mortal body and the immortal soul caught in a cycle of births in a way similar to that of the Upaniṣads. Plato conceived of human beings in terms of a tangible body plus a separate, intangible psyche, while Aristotle viewed the body and form as being inextricably joined together. The Platonic concept of the soul was gradually transformed through the neo-Platonism of Plotinus (ca. 205–270 CE). Neo-Platonist conceptions are said to have deeply influenced St. Augustine, and through him the later Christian thinkers. Descartes (1596–1650), working within the tradition of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, reformulated the traditional conceptions of soul and body in the context of a mechanistic worldview that was being developed by Galileo (1564–1642), a senior contemporary. A devout and practicing Catholic, Descartes was unwilling to adopt the totally naturalistic and seemingly atheistic views of Galileo and Hobbes. Torn between two conflicting worldviews, Descartes proposed a thoroughly dualistic worldview that sharply separated the world of tangible bodies determined by physical forces from the domain of intangible and free souls. In this view, body and soul, or matter and mind, were conceived to be divinely created *substances* with highly contrasting *attributes* (see Table 6.1).

It is not necessary to discuss all the attributes of the two Cartesian substances here. Focusing on the issue at hand we must first note that the unthinking physical substance in Descartes's scheme is fully determined by laws that govern mechanisms, such as the lever. The unextended substance or soul was said to possess a God-given freedom of will, but Descartes's own account of movements in the physical world casts doubt on the soul's ability to influence them. If, as he insisted, God "always preserves an equal amount of movement in the universe,"[9] how could the soul add new movements from outside the physical world or stop those that are in progress? As an answer to this question we might speculate that perhaps Descartes held that although the *quantity* of motion of the body could not be altered by anyone, the rational soul, "lodged in ... [the] body as a pilot in a vessel,"[10] could nevertheless affect the "course" or *direction* of motion. To help make sense of such a possibility, Descartes contrived the notion of animal spirits that putatively run back and forth through pathways connecting the brain with the limbs,

Table 6.1
Contrasting Attributes of Mind and Matter as Conceived by René Descartes

Body (matter)	Soul (l'âme: soul, mind, or self)
Determined	Free
Extended	Unextended
Unthinking	Thinking
Tangible	Intangible
Divisible	Indivisible
Destructible (Mortal)	Indestructible (Immortal)

acting as fast messengers.[11] This notion had its day till von Helmholtz (1821–1894) demonstrated that what ran across the neural pathways in the body was simply electrical current—a form of physical energy that strictly follows the law of conservation of energy. Despite the lack of such insights that were to appear centuries later, Descartes himself was aware of the logical difficulty in reconciling the doctrine of free will with that of "Divine preordination." Indeed, in his *Principles of Philosophy* (Part I, Principle XLI) Descartes (1641/1911, Vol. 1, p. 235) clearly concluded that this paradox was beyond the comprehension of limited human intelligence.

In his own days, one of Descartes's junior contemporaries, Arnold Geulincx (1624–1669), recognized the need to bridge the yawning gap between the radically different Cartesian worlds of mind and matter. He suggested a "parallelist" solution to the problem, saying that events in the mental and physical world do not causally interact; they merely co-occur, just as two perfectly synchronized clocks strike precisely on the hour—without having any causal connections between them. Many different solutions to the "mind–body problem" have been proposed over the centuries, but none has been able to satisfy everyone. The dualist metaphysics of Descartes have been criticized by modern Western philosophers ranging from existentialists on the one hand to analytical philosophers on the other. It is neither possible nor necessary for us to survey the whole range of solutions suggested thus far to solve the mind–body problem. It would be useful, however, to examine Gilbert Ryle's most influential critique of the Cartesian ontological categories.

In his well-known work, *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle (1949/1973) mounts a strong attack on Cartesian dualism. He notes first that the Cartesian model assumes that careers constituting episodes of minds and bodies belong to *two different kinds of existence*, and allows no bridge in between: "Transactions between minds and bodies involve links where no links can be" (Ryle, 1949/1973,

p. 65). The thrust of Ryle's attack against dualism lies in showing that the doctrine first contrives the myth of two separate worlds with totally different properties and languages to describe them, and then goes on to find equally artificial ways to connect the two. It first creates mind as a "ghost in the machine" and then tries to exorcise it by invoking more ghosts, such as the "animal spirits." Although in the end Ryle seems to tacitly ask us to recognize the observable machine and bury the intangible ghost, his overt message is that we should abandon the misleading categories of mind as well as matter. The idea is to avoid the "category error," and thereby to dissolve the mind–body problem.

We need not review all of Ryle's arguments here; given the focus of this chapter on the self-as-agent, it will be useful to note his most central argument against the notion of volition in the context of Cartesian dualism. As part of his attempt to demolish the Cartesian doctrine of the mind, Ryle tackles each of its three alleged functions, namely thinking, feeling, and willing. His arguments attacking the idea of will may be summarized as follows. First, according to Ryle, most people cannot recollect or adequately account for their acts of "willing;" second, a person can never witness the volitions of anyone else and testify to their existence; third, the connection between volition and action is admittedly a mystery that is neither solved nor soluble; fourth, voluntary physical actions must be triggered by certain mental acts, which in turn must be initiated by prior acts, and so on ad infinitum (Ryle, 1949/1973, pp. 63–66). Speaking with "deliberate abusiveness," Ryle derides the Cartesian notion of human agency as "the dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" (p. 17) and dismisses volitions as "occult inner thrusts of actions" (p. 66).

These objections are not too difficult to deal with. First, the inability of people to recollect or account for their acts of willing is no reason to deny their occurrence. Second, although public observability has proven to be a highly useful criterion for ensuring the validity of propositions in natural sciences, insistence on its application rules out pain, dreams, intentions, and other such psychological phenomena as legitimate topics of inquiry. Imposing such a limit on psychological knowledge is to strangle it to near death. The expulsion of subjectivity from psychology in the name of public observability not only robs human beings of their most essential feature, but also deprives psychology of one of its most challenging and interesting areas of study. Third, the connection between volition and action is a mystery only in the dichotomous ontology of the Cartesian variety, not in many other world-views. Popper's model of the three worlds (Popper & Eccles, 1977), for instance, is designed specifically to demystify the mind–body relationship. Similarly, the Sāṅkhya concepts of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* allow for the intangible and subtle *sattva* to interact with the tangible and gross body, creating no mystification of the mind–body relationship.[12] Fourth, the infinite regress that results from trying to trace an act of volition that triggers a given volition is not a difficulty peculiar to the problem of agency alone; it is equally applicable to causality. If we can spare the scientist from the ordeal of having to explain the entire chain of causality from the putative beginning of the universe—or Aristotle's prime mover—is it fair to force the humanist to run the gauntlet?

I would like to clarify here that the above points are raised as objections to Ryle's categorical denial of volition, not in defense of Cartesian dualism. I am sympathetic to the view that the terms "mind" and "matter" are a part of a Wittgensteinian "language game" we invent to speak of certain issues in our lives, and this particular language game has generated more problems than it has solved. To put it in constructionist terms, the Cartesian way of "world-making" is not a satisfactory one. But the inadequacy of a conceptual model does not prove that the problems it tries to address are necessarily pseudoproblems. To dismiss human agency due to the faults in the Cartesian model is to throw out the baby with the bath water.

Hume: Questioning the Efficacy of Causality and Volition

As noted in the first chapter, and again in the second, Hume questioned the basis for assuming a "necessary connexion" between any two events across time: cause and effect, intention and action, action and its consequence—whether reward or punishment, just or unjust. While the lack of assured connection between intention and action throws out the concept of self-as-agent and therefore personhood, the ideas of morality and justice go out of the window unless one assumes a connection between action and its consequence. Hume's (1739/1978) insistence that the maxim that every event must have a cause is "utterly incapable of demonstrative proof" (pp. 78–79) precipitated a major crisis in Western thought.

As noted by Bunge (1959/1979, p. 45), Hume's celebrated critique of causal efficacy is based on certain basic assumptions of empiricism: that experience, meaning sense impressions, is the *only* criterion in validating propositions; that sense impressions are momentary, i.e., unrelated to either past or future; and that every event is a fresh entity, and therefore neither could the past affect the way things are now nor could my current intentions and designs really affect those of the future. One of the different forms of Humean influence is seen in the work of the physicist Ernst Mach (1893), who followed the Humean idea of the sensory origins of knowledge, and went ahead to assert that "Nature is *composed* of sensations as its elements" (p. 482; emphasis added). This view clearly extends Humean epistemology to a "phenomenalist" ontology, and concludes that the "things" we see in nature are but abstractions. Mach (1893) extends this line of reasoning further to state that "There is no cause or effect in nature; ... nature simply *is*" (p. 483, emphasis original). The lawful "determination" of events means nothing more than the sense in which an angle of a triangle is determined by the other two angles, i.e., it can be *calculated* on their basis. Although few scientists and philosophers agreed with Mach's phenomenalist ontology, many

followed him in considering causal determination to be no more than the "functional" interdependence of values in an equation. Once a stable pattern of relationship among events is described in terms of a mathematical equation, we can "predict" events in the sense of being able to calculate the values of terms representing them on the basis of the known magnitudes of the other terms.

The positivist philosopher Moritz Schlick (1932/1949) affirmed the same view when he stated that "Determination ... means Possibility of Calculation, and *nothing else*. It does *not* mean that C[ause] in some magic way *produces* E[ffect]" (p. 525; emphasis original). Insofar as we are able to represent the interdependence of events in terms of a mathematical function, a set of values representing future events can be calculated or "determined" in terms of another set representing present events, and vice versa. This implies that the present can be said to be determined by future events ("teleology") as much as the present in determining the future ("causality"). Says Schlick (1932/1949): "After we have learned from science what the word determination really stands for, we know that this distinction between teleological and causal determination breaks down" (p. 527). Indeed, a similar approach has led to the argument that a missile that can hit a moving target by "anticipation," i.e., by calculation of the future position of its target, is said to be purposive or teleological (Rosenbluth, Wiener, & Bigelow, 1943).

During the days of World War II, when Rosenbluth and others were making such arguments, missiles and robots were in a relatively primitive stage. Equipped with the advanced techniques for monitoring the surrounding conditions and for high-speed computing, robots of the 1990s can precisely calculate the trajectory of a moving target. Even as a hunting animal runs toward an anticipated, rather than the actual, position of its prey, a guided missile can keep track of the changing pattern of the target's motion and strike it with great speed and accuracy. Human-made automatons are thus becoming increasingly similar to animals, and indeed to human beings themselves. As the present situation is brought increasingly under the control of anticipated events as opposed to those of the past, the distinction between teleology and mechanism, or final and efficient causes, is becoming increasingly blurred.

The science of control and communication in machines and organisms, or cybernetics, is now well advanced, leading to a sophisticated understanding of the self-regulation of automatons and organisms. Piaget is among the many psychologists who are trying to help understand highly complex and intelligent behavior in cybernetic terminology. The rapidly developing fields of cognitive science and artificial intelligence are further narrowing the gap between human beings and machines. Does this mean that we no longer need to make a distinction between human agency and robotic self-regulation? Is volitional control of behavior a mere illusion? It seems to me that robots must be viewed in different terms from human beings as long as the former are heavily dependent on being programmed from an outside agency. It is crucial to make a distinction between being controlled from the *outside* versus *inside*, i.e., between what Immanuel Kant called heteronomy and autonomy, respectively, and this is the topic to which we now turn.

Immanuel Kant: A Rationalist View of Causality and Volition

Kant clearly saw that Hume's arguments simultaneously undermined Newtonian science and Christian morality, and set out to rescue both. Kant agreed with Hume that causality or necessity cannot be established on empirical grounds, but he tried to justify them on rational grounds. According to Kant, "cause" is not a matter of power inherent in events to produce specific results, but a category of the understanding, or a way in which reason makes sense of the relationship among events. As well, necessity is not a matter of command given to nature, but a demand placed on us by reason. The human mind is universally structured to view events in terms of a priori categories such as necessity versus contingency, and that is the way it is.

Whether or not Kant's Herculean efforts did save science from collapse is not the issue for us to discuss here. With reference to the topic under discussion, we need to note that Kant also tried to provide a rational basis for ethics, and in this connection he had to deal with the issue of freedom versus determinism. Even as Kant insisted that we must grant the continued existence and sameness of the self-as-knower or else deny the very possibility of knowledge, he also pointed out that the thought of "ought" implies the thought of "can," i.e., freedom to choose and ability to produce actions. In other words, it makes no sense to say that one "ought" to be doing this or that unless one could in fact have chosen that specific course of action among several available alternatives. There is no point in blaming someone for an action that was forced by external factors, whether they be forces of nature, biological drives, or commands from God or a social authority. If moral credit or blame is to make sense at all, an "inner" force free to act in particular ways notwithstanding "outer" forces to the contrary must be assumed to exist and be effective. This inner force was the *autonomous* "will" as opposed to *heteronomous* or external coercive factors such as efficient causes of nature, divine dispensations, or "Providence."

Committed to a causally determined world of science, Kant could not admit to an autonomous will that was free to act as it pleased, imposing a course of action in a world governed by the universal laws of nature. An autonomous will must be capable of spontaneously initiating a course of action in the empirical world in which, according to Newton's law of inertia, nothing could move without being moved. How could the will intervene in the middle of tightly controlled causal chains of events working on a predictable temporal series of events extending from past to future? Human actions, insofar as they belong to the phenomenal world of space, time, and mass, would have to be predictable according to nature's timetable. Would not spontaneous human action introduce new, unpredictable elements

in the causally determined world? As remarked by Lewis Beck (1960), "This requires us to accept a secularized version of the classical theological quandary of man's freedom and God's foresight, and it seems no more intelligible in structure and equitable in outcome than that hoary mystery" (p. 192). How did Kant solve the dilemma?

Kant's conceptualization of freedom and will is highly complex and, as pointed out by several critics (e.g., Jones, 1969, Vol. 4, pp. 84–90; Beck, 1960, pp. 176–208), ambiguous and equivocal. It is neither necessary nor possible to review it here; only some of its features need to be pointed out insofar as they enable us to understand and compare some of the contemporary views of human agency and their parallels in Indian thought.

Kant made a fundamental distinction between the *noumenal* self operating in the timeless world of transcendental dialectics and universal reason, as opposed to the *empirical* self, meaning the person who sensually experiences objects in the phenomenal world and deals with them at the practical level. Equipped with the capacity for pure, dialectical reasoning, the noumenal self spontaneously generates ideas for action and the practical reason translates the idea into a command expressed in the form of a moral law. Indeed, Kant conceives of the will in two levels: "Wille" at the noumenal, pure level, and a separate "Willkür" at the practical level. Critics seem to agree that Kant vacillates between the two levels, creating ambiguities in his formulation. Indeed, Kant himself was not convinced of the adequacy of his attempt at reconciling freedom with determinism. In *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant (1785/1909) says "But Reason would overstep all its bounds if it undertook to *explain how* pure reason can be practical, which would be exactly the same problem as to explain *how freedom is possible*" (p. 79; emphasis original).

With this somber note in mind, it is better not to try to pursue Kant's ideas at a greater length, but turn instead to their implications for modern psychology. There are at least two prominent psychologists who have followed some of Kant's key conceptions in their work, namely Piaget (1966) and Kohlberg (1981). In an atmosphere dominated by the behaviorist neglect of moral behavior, Piaget and Kohlberg's theories of moral development stand out in strong relief. They clearly take human beings to be moral agents and investigate the *development* of moral reasoning and moral behavior from childhood to maturity. Of the two, Kohlberg repeatedly acknowledges his position as following from that of Kant and a Kantian moral philosopher, Rawls (1971).[13] In Piaget's prolific writings, one finds numerous references expressing points of selective agreement with Kant, as well as those of strong disagreement. In regard to views of moral behavior, however, Piaget seems to agree more than disagree with Kant. In Piaget, as in Kant, the essence of being moral is to be autonomous, to follow the dictates of one's dialectical reasoning about principles that state how one ought to behave under given circumstances. Parallel to Kant's "categorical imperative," there is emphasis in both Piaget's and Kohlberg's view of morality on being guided by ostensibly universal principles such as the value of human life. In Piagetian as well as Kohlbergian views of moral development, in the earliest and most "primitive" level of morality behavior is guided by what is pleasurable to the fledgling ego; this is followed by a second, "heteronomous" level where one's ideas of proper behavior are determined by external sources—parents' opinion or established law and so on; and in the third, advanced level one follows universal moral principles regardless of the consequences, pleasant or unpleasant.

The Piaget–Kohlberg view of moral development stands in sharp contrast to the behaviorist view. While the former implies the Kantian notion of the power of reason to overcome the force of passions, the behaviorists, by and large, have implied the supremacy of reward and punishments, echoing the Humean view of reason as the slave of passions. Although explicit talk of human agency is rare in Piaget and Kohlberg's writings, both human freedom and autonomy are obviously implicit. Explicit treatment of human agency is gradually beginning to be introduced in contemporary psychology in the work of Rychlak (1979, 1990), Harré (1983), and Westcott (1988), among others. The strongest voices in favor of human freedom in the modern times that have been influencing psychology are clearly those of the existential philosophers, particularly Heidegger and Sartre.

The Existentialist Position: On Choosing One's Possibilities for the Future

The central issue for Martin Heidegger was human existence or Being, an issue discussed by Western philosophers since the time of Plato. Dissatisfied with the available perspectives on it, and keen to convey his distinctive view of what it means to be a human being, Heidegger coined the term *Dasein*, literally meaning "being there." Most translators have retained the term in order not to distort the special connotations that Heidegger attached to it. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1927/1962) explains the term while unfolding his complex viewpoint "Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence," says Heidegger, "in terms of a possibility of itself; to be itself or not itself. Dasein has either chosen the possibilities itself, or grown up in them already" (p. 33). Further, he insists that "[o]nly the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold or by neglecting" (p. 33). Thus, anticipating alternative possibilities for one's future and having to choose among them are an inalienable feature of human beings. We are, in other words, agents more than anything else.

Each and every *Dasein* finds itself "thrown" by accident of birth into a particular set of conditions that "had been" in the past, something over which one just cannot have any control. From the time of birth onward, parents and other caregivers determine many things about children—by what name they shall be called, where they would "belong," and what they might have in store for the

future: having or not having siblings, having an education, making a living, and so on. It is usually the other people, the "they," that guide us to our futures. Nevertheless, we do have a fundamental choice: we could either choose to be guided by the "they," or weigh among alternatives available at a given time and make choices on our own terms. According to Heidegger, to be guided by the "they" is to be unauthentic, while making one's own choices is to be authentic. Heidegger obviously places high value on authenticity; being unauthentic is considered simply dreadful. This value is shared widely in North American sociology and psychology under alternative labels, such as the value of inner- as opposed to other-directedness in David Riesman's (1950) sociology, or of independence as opposed to conformity or obedience in the social psychology of, respectively, Solomon Asch (1951) and Stanley Milgram (1974). It should be clear that all these conceptual variations imply what Kantians would call autonomy and agency.

Turning again to Heidegger, we may note that according to his perspective, there is something inevitable in everyone's future: death—the ultimate nonbeing of every being. With death, all the social relationships in terms of which one may have defined who one is and one's relationship with everything that one has learned to care for must come to an end. Nobody but the particular *Dasein* itself must face this part of future. As a popular folk saying in India puts it, "one is born alone, and must die alone." Nevertheless, human life is always forward-looking, "living-ahead-of-itself." One is always working toward an anticipated outcome "for-the-sake-of-which" one undertakes this that or the other course of action (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 236). Thus, in Heidegger's views one hears the echo of Aristotle's "final cause." Clearly, Heidegger and his followers have tried to restore human agency long under attack by the likes of Hume, LaMettrie, and Skinner.

Jean-Paul Sartre was arguably the strongest advocate of the voluntarist position presented by the existentialist philosophers. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (1943/1966) forcefully suggests that not only do we have freedom to choose, but are condemned to choose whether we like it or not:

> Thus there are no *accidents* in life; a community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this war is *my* war; it is in my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion; these ultimate possibles are those which must always be present for us.... For lack of getting out of it, I have *chosen* it. This can be due to inertia, to cowardice in the face of public opinion, or because I prefer certain other values to the value of refusal to join in the war (the good opinion of my relatives, the honor of my family, etc.). Any way you look at it, it is a matter of a choice. (p. 708; emphasis original)

Once a person realizes that one could sign out of the game of life and avoid all possible outcomes, good or bad, by committing suicide, one must also realize that one has continued to live by choice. Not doing anything is also a matter of choice, if only be default. It is interesting that Sartre uses a first-person form in saying the above; it is only a personal stance that can forcefully and authentically bring forth the point he is trying to make. No amount of impersonal analysis can bring home the point that I find myself required to choose a particular course of action.

It is also interesting that Sartre uses conscription into a war as the scenario, a scenario he and his World War II generation knew firsthand. There is an amazing parallel between Sartre and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in that both use the battlefield as the backdrop to illustrate the importance of having to make choices in life. Standing in the middle of armies poised for battle, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that he cannot just stand there doing nothing. "Not even for a moment can one stay without engaging in action; one is helpless about having to do one's karma ..." (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, 3.5; translation by A. C. Paranjpe). Both *Gītā* and Sartre express a common paradox: one always has a *choice*, which one *must* exercise.

The Polarization of Views on Free Will in Modern Western Thought

The nature and degree of polarization of opinion on the free will–determinism issue in modern Western thought should be clear against the backdrop of the above discussion. Sartre and Skinner clearly stand at opposite poles on this issue. While Skinner admits no freedom and proclaims 100% environmental determinism, Sartre insists that at no moment are we without freedom of choice. There is a long history of a dialectic of ideas that has gradually led to the polarization in its current form. In the early days of modern psychology, William James (1884/1948, p. 40) coined the term "hard determinism" to designate a position that assumes a total or 100% determinism. As noted, Popper (1966) and many others have shown that hard determinism is an untenable position. At the opposite end of the spectrum, it is obviously equally untenable to assume that there is 100% freedom, or that "we are perpetually engaged in our choice and perpetually conscious of the fact that we ourselves can abruptly invert this choice" as J.-P. Sartre (1943/1966, p. 598) put it. There are many who take a position somewhere in between the two extremes; there are innumerable shades of what James (1884/1948, p. 40) called "soft determinism," which somehow reconciles degrees of freedom with degrees of determinism. This does not mean that those who adopt a soft-determinist or "compatibilist" position have satisfactorily resolved the paradox. The conclusion, according to Richard Taylor (1967), is that "whether determinism is true or of whether men have free will is no longer regarded as a simple or even philosophically sophisticated question ... Concealed in it is a vast array of more fundamental questions, the answers to which are largely unknown" (p. 373).

Psychologists cannot wait, nor have they been waiting, for a satisfactory answer to the free will–determinism issue. During the heyday of behaviorism, the overall trend was to stay close to determinism. Although several humanistic and existentially oriented psychologists have been upholding voluntaristic positions in various forms, they have not been in the academic "mainstream." However, through the 1970s and 1980s, several psychologists have advanced a

more or less explicit treatment of human agency and autonomy. Together, they are bringing about what Brian Little (1987, p. 230) has called a "conative revolution." It would be useful to take a brief overview of the recent resurgence of conative concepts.

The Conative Revolution: The Open Advocacy and Tacit Acceptance of Human Agency in Contemporary Psychology

In a series of publications starting in the late 1960s, Joseph Rychlak (1968, 1979, 1981, 1990) has been strongly and persistently advocating a teleological approach to psychology. He strongly criticizes Skinner's deterministic and mechanistic view of human beings and advocates a psychology of "rigorous humanism" (Rychlak, 1977). Unlike the Rogerian and Maslowian varieties of humanistic psychology, Rychlak's humanism involves meticulous arguments grounded in historically informed ideas of causality, ontology, and epistemology.[14] He argues, for instance, that Skinner's views implicitly accept only efficient causes, and traces the roots of such exclusive emphasis to Francis Bacon's rejection of Aristotelian final cause and to the empiricist epistemology of Locke and Hume. Noting that fear of anthropomorphism has, among other things, historically contributed to the denial of purposiveness of human behavior, Rychlak points out the ludicrousness in trying to avoid an anthropomorphic account of the anthropos. According to Rychlak, what empowers human beings to exercise free will is their capacity to construe alternative possibilities for future outcomes and to attach differential values to the alternatives by weighing them in the light of dialectical reasoning. In his more recent work, Rychlak (1990) tries to show "why computers do not have free will in spite of the famous Rosenbluth, Wiener, and Bigelow (1943) argument that free will is negative feedback" (personal communication).

Romano Harré is another equally strong advocate of human agency in contemporary psychology, although his line of argument is quite different from Rychlak's. In *The Explanation of Social Behaviour*, Harré and Secord (1972) note that the mechanistic concept of behavior that is common in contemporary psychology is based on the traditional concept of science, where "action was supposed to be impressed upon passive things, which merely passed it on" (p. 67). They suggest that this view needs to be revised in the light of the modern concept of cause that "developed in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, under the pressure of discoveries of electrical phenomena, and the critical philosophy of physics developed by I. Kant and R. J. Boscovich" (pp. 67–68). According to the latter conception, "[a]ction is to be treated as the realization of a potentiality created in space in the neighborhood of active things" (p. 68). Such potentiality implies the capability or *power* of things and individuals to produce "a certain action either of itself or upon another thing, in virtue of its nature." Harré and Secord give the examples of things which possess power conceived in this sense: the chemical composition of an explosive and the electron structure of an atom.

This view of things and individuals provides the basis of Harré's more recent, in-depth analysis of human agency.

In *Personal Being*, Harré (1983, Ch. 6) makes a clear distinction between patients and agents. Patients are beings that remain unchanged and quiescent unless forced to change by external stimuli; they have passive dispositions or "liabilities." By contrast, agents are beings with intrinsic or acquired "powers," or active tendencies that can produce changes in themselves or in other things upon removal of restraints. Harré is keen not to introduce in his conceptual scheme any form of mysterious force such as "psychic energy" or "force of intention" to justify the elimination of the reference to "I" as the active agent (1983, p. 192). Indeed, he appears to make a concerted effort toward developing a model that is consistent with the latest developments in physics, biology, cybernetics, and artificial intelligence. Apart from Rychlak and Harré, there are several others, such as Albert Bandura (1982), who have begun to explicitly accommodate the concept of agency in their work. In my view, among these, Harré and Rychlak's approaches are the most philosophically sophisticated. In addition, a *tacit* acceptance of agency is reflected in a wide array of recent writings in cognitive and personality psychology. Let me illustrate how so.

In Chapter 4, we considered Hazel Markus's conceptualization of the self as having cognitive as well as affective and conative aspects. Unlike the common conceptualization of the self as a relatively static cognitive structure, she views it as a malleable structure as well as a dynamic process that continually monitors the current situation and construes possibilities for the future. It is the individual's capacity to construe possible future selves and to assess their affective quality that allows him or her to steer ongoing activity toward desirable goals. Markus and Ruvolo (1989) have tried to explain how the capacity for anticipation of events and the construal of possible selves culminates in a program of action for the self-system. "We suggest," say Markus and Ruvolo (1989), "that possible selves are the cognitive/affective elements that *incite* and *direct* one's self-relevant actions (p. 217; emphasis added). In other words, future selves indicate outcomes "for the sake of which" a course of action is initiated.

It should now be clear that these researchers are trying to rehabilitate Aristotle's much-discredited final causes without fussing over terminology or causing philosophical furor. Markus and Ruvolo (1989, pp. 212–213) list several recently formulated concepts that connect self-concept with agentic action: current concerns (Klinger, 1975); life themes (Schank & Abelson, 1977); personal goals (Staub, 1980); personal projects (Little, 1983); personal strivings (Emmons, 1986); psychological careers (Raynor & McFarlin, 1986); and life tasks (Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987). This list should affirm Brian Little's claim (mentioned before) that a "conative revolution" is in fact under way in contemporary psychology. Little's own work provides a good illustration of the kind of work in the mainstream of psychology that affirms human agency.

Little (1983, p. 276) proposes the concept of a *personal project*, which is

defined as "a set of interrelated acts extending over time, which is intended to maintain or attain a state of affairs *foreseen* by the individual (emphasis added). He has developed a simple device to help explore the nature of the personal projects that people tend to undertake in various stages of their lives. It simply involves a formatted sheet of paper on which subjects are asked to list the various "personal projects," or sets of activities they may be thinking of undertaking over the following day, week, year, or other desired period, and to rate each project on a variety of dimensions: its perceived degree of difficulty, importance, expected outcome, positive or negative impact, the degree to which it might be congruent with one's own values and self-identity, and so on. People mention all sorts of projects, ranging from simple short activities like mailing a postcard, through more engaging ones like completing a college education, to long-range and highly ambitious ones like "eradicating cancer from the face of the earth." If we ask a person why she would undertake a project such as obtaining a degree, she might identify a higher-order goal set up for a more distant future: obtaining a PhD, for instance. If we continue probing with successive "whys," a person may identify successively higher-order ends: landing a job, pursuing a career, and becoming happy, perhaps. Little (1987) suggests that such a probe tends to produce a *terminal account*, i.e., "an account which does not require an additional reason for its being undertaken (equivalent to a Rokeachean terminal value)" (pp. 240–241) (see Rokeach, 1973, 1979). This last point is interesting in connecting the concepts of causes, reasons, and values. It suggests that, whatever might be the efficient causes that energize action, human behavior is guided by rules such as "do not steal," and also by values, such as those of happiness, love, or some such thing worth living for. Little's work on "personal projects" illustrated recent development of conceptual frameworks and investigative techniques useful and necessary for fathoming the complexities of the agentic aspect of human beings.

Looking back on the selective historical account, it should be clear that the history of the concepts of causality and intentional action has been closely intertwined in the history of thought. The modern phase of this history has seen a polarization in thinking about human agency, with deep divisions that have most clearly affected contemporary psychology. As we shall soon see, this particular course of the history of ideas is specific to the Western world. What the history of Indian thought has to offer on this topic is quite different.

Karma and Determinism in the Traditional Indian Worldview

As Kalidas Bhattacharyya (1960) clearly and repeatedly (1967) pointed out, "the problem of freedom of will has never been systematically discussed in the history of Indian philosophy" (1967, p. 315). Unlike in the West, where the debate between voluntarists and determinists has continued for centuries, the Indian worldview did not see a split between the advocates of "Autonomous Man [*sic*]" versus the defenders of "Plastic Man." It is widely recognized that in Indian thought, the Law of Karma became a basic and common assumption covering lawfulness within the material as well as the moral domains. As noted in Chapter 2, it is accepted almost universally in Indian thought. Contrary to a common misunderstanding, the Law of Karma does not imply any kind of fatalism. It is basically a principle that assumes lawfulness and order in the physical, biological, mental, and moral realms. As noted by Hiriyanna (1952), "the karma doctrine is grounded in a moral view of the universe, ... freedom is not only compatible with, but is actually *demanded* by it" (p. 32, emphasis added). While freedom is always implicit in the concept of *karma*, some authors have spelled it out clearly and emphatically. Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.2.2), for instance, states that, in regard to most worldly actions (*laukika karma*), persons are free to act one way or another, or not to act at all, if they so choose. For instance, he says, a person could choose to walk, ride, proceed otherwise, or decide not to move at all.[15] Śaṅkara extends such freedom beyond the domain of ordinary daily activities (*laukika karma*) to actions enjoined by the scriptures (*vaidika karma*), thereby clarifying that freedom to choose alternative courses of action extends to moral as well as nonmoral spheres.

When Śaṅkara affirms the human freedom to choose among alternate courses of action, he does not imply unlimited freedom. He clearly asserts that a person is not wholly independent or completely free to do what he or she wishes; a variety of conditions in space, time, and causality must be met in order to produce an intended result.[16] Śaṅkara (1980, 2.3.14.37) gives the example of a cook, who must depend on water, fuel, and a variety of ingredients to produce a desired recipe. Regardless of having to depend on various accessories, the cook nevertheless is (at least partly) responsible for the good, bad, or indifferent results. In giving the example of the cook who must depend on the capacity of fuel to heat the ingredients of a recipe to obtain the desired result, Śaṅkara alludes to the need for a collaboration of final and efficient causes in the successful execution of human actions. However, the typical Indian perspective on the relationship between the moral and material domains to which the final and efficient causes belong is considerably different from that in the West. The differences between the Indian and Western worldviews in this regard demand an in-depth understanding and careful interpretation of each worldview in the light of the other. During the past few years, a considerable amount of work has been done in North America in trying to interpret the doctrine of karma in the context of the Western worldview. Thanks to the efforts made and inspiration provided by the philosopher Karl H. Potter, several workshops were held and volumes were published on the doctrine of karma in North America in the past two decades (O'Flaherty, 1980; Keyes & Valentine Daniel, 1983; Neufeldt, 1986). In the following sections of this chapter, I shall be guided mainly by the work of Karl Potter (1964, 1967, 1980) and Wilhelm Halbfass (1980, 1991a).

In previous chapters, the doctrine of karma was mentioned several times. First, in Chapter 2, we noted how the idea of an individual's responsibility for his or her actions is shaped by the doctrine of karma in the tradition of the Indian concept of social ethos, or *dharma*. Then again in Chapter 3, we saw how the Law of Karma is an integral part of Śaṅkara's system of the Advaita Vedānta. The basic *ethical* implications of the Law of Karma follow from the assumption that good actions lead to desirable consequences, and vice versa. Perhaps the earliest succinct statement of this idea is found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad (4.2.5): "The doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil ... what action (*karma*) [a person] performs, that he procures for himself"(see R. E. Hume's translation, 1931, p. 140; emphasis original). The spirit of these words is not much different from the Biblical assertion "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians, 6.7). However, in Indian thought, the metaphor of seeds sown by actions is taken more seriously, and is applied to the plant and animal kingdoms, as well as to the psychic and moral domains. Moreover, the doctrine of karma suggests a *natural* and inevitable *causal* connection between actions and their consequences.

In a single long essay (1991a),[17] Halbfass has shown how the nature of karmic causality is conceived of in different ways by the various schools of the Upaniṣadic, Jain, and Buddhist traditions. In his view, the concept of karma has different applications in different contexts. He identifies at least three basically different functions and dimensions of the concept of karma. "[K]arma is," says Halbfass (1991a): "(1) a principle of causal explanation (of factual occurrences); (2) a guideline of ethical orientation; (3) the counterpart and stepping-stone of final liberation" (p. 295). From the vantage point of the psychology of action, all such considerations are important in their own right. It seems to me that by comparison to Western thought, in the Indian tradition the ethical orientation and concern for final liberation from the chain of action and its consequences has an upper hand, and causal explanations of factual occurrences have a secondary place. In Aristotelian terms, final cause explanations of human behavior are placed first and explanations in terms of material, efficient, and formal causes are subordinated. Such prioritization stands in sharp contrast with Western views in general and Skinner's approach in particular. Exclusive reliance on efficient causes, as with Skinner, implies fully mechanistic explanations of human behavior; it means that freedom of will and personhood are denied, and moral issues go begging. In Indian thought, by and large, personhood, free will, and the just world hypothesis are taken for granted, and concepts of causality and broad worldviews are devised in accordance with these basic ideas. Contrasting approaches to the relationship between morality and causality in Indian and Western thought have radically different implications for psychologies developed within their respective frameworks. Since the views of the Advaita Vedānta have already been presented, let me present the views of the Mīmāṁsā, Vaiśeṣika, and Yoga. I am choosing these because they emphasize various aspects and implications of human action in varied contexts: in regard to religious prescriptions and in respect of events in the physical, biological, and psychological domains.

The Potency of Religious Rituals According to the System of Mīmāṁsā

As pointed out by Halbfass (1991a), the ritualistic religion of the ancient Vedas understood *karma* or action primarily in terms of the performance of rituals enjoined by the Vedic texts. The system of Mīmāṁsā was primarily aimed at the delineation of the precise meaning of prescribed actions through Vedic exegesis. Apart from the regular or daily rites (*nitya karma*), such as the prayers at dawn and dusk, that have been considered mandatory according to the Vedic religion, there were optional sacrificial rituals aimed at attaining various desired results (*kāmya karma*). While some of the intended results involved mundane things such as obtaining cattle or having a rain fall, others involved otherworldly gains, such as stay in heaven (*svarga*). For otherworldly gains, one would of course have to wait until after death, but the mundane results could not be attained instantaneously either. For instance, a crime such as homicide was almost surely to be punished here on earth, but the punishment might follow in a matter of days or even years rather than immediately after the act of killing. To help make sense of the delay in the consequences of action within the lifetime of a person as well as thereafter, it was thought that good as well as bad actions generate a certain storable "power" (*śakti*) that lies dormant for extended periods of time before bringing about an appropriate result. Followers of the Mīmāṁsā system coined the term *apūrva* (literally meaning unprecedented) to designate the consequences of actions of remote past that have no immediately preceding cause. For want of an apparent cause in the immediate past, the current events are attributed to the force of an invisible power that makes the good or bad consequences of intended actions appear at some later date.

From the viewpoint of the Mīmāṁsā system, the act of initiating the sacrificial rituals had the potency to generate an appropriately beneficial storable power. According to Halbfass (1991a):

> In Mīmāṁsā, only the *utsarga*, the official act of initiating the sacrifice, has to be done by the sacrificer; the actual performances themselves may be left to "paid agents." Although Kumārila maintains that the soul (ātman) of the sacrificer is the subject or the "doer" of the sacrificial action, the question of personal authorship and responsibility is less important here: what produces apūrva is rather the impersonal power of the sacrifice itself, which is only unleashed, activated during the actual performance of the sacrifice. (p. 309; emphasis original)

In the Mīmāṁsā system, the concept of *apūrva* was often considered as some kind of a magical quality without any substratum (*anāsrita*). The overall interest in this

system would thus seem to be in acquiring magical powers rather than in accounting for causality or ensuring justice. Although there was belief in the existence of a soul that would proceed to heaven or hell (*svarga* or *naraka*) as appropriate after the death of the body, there seemed little interest in specifying where the powers generated by the soul's actions might reside and how they might result in good or bad experiences. Several thinkers of the rival systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, however, believed in the storing of the powers generated by actions, but reconceptualized it within a different model of nature and the cosmos.

Action and Its Consequences in the Physical and Biological Context: Views of the Vaiśeṣika System

The Vaiśesika system radically redefined karma in terms of motion. Indeed, this system is probably the most naturalistic of all the systems of Indian thought. In *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, Brajendranath Seal (n.d./1985) gives a clear account of the Vaiśeṣika view of motion. As pointed out by him, Praśastapāda (5th century), one of the early Vaiśeṣika thinkers, defined karma as the unconditional cause of the change of the position of a particle (p. 129). Praśastapāda considers in some detail the nature of rectilinear, curvilinear, and vibratory motion of objects. He distinguishes among different causes of motion, such as gravity (*gurutva*), which is the cause of falling bodies, fluidity (*dravatva*), which makes liquids flow, and motion caused by volition, such as an object falling due to an intentional push by hand. He distinguishes motion caused by these three types of causes from that resulting from a fourth cause that he calls the "unseen" (*adṛṣṭa*), since it cannot be ascertained by observation or inference as the others are. The following are given as examples of motion caused by the "unseen" cause: the first motion of particles at the beginning of creation, the movement of iron toward a magnet, the movement of particles from the root to the stem of a plant by capillary action (called the *abhisarpaṇa*), and the upward motion of particles due to evaporation. Seal (n.d./1985) notes the following additional category of motion attributed to the operation of the "unseen":

> The operation of merit and demerit (dharma and adharma), a transcendental cause, which has to be posited in explaining the conjunctions and disjunctions of souls with their organic vehicles (bodies), which cannot be ascribed to natural causes, but [is] presuppose[d by] the law of Karma, or the operation of moral causation, as superimposed on the natural order. (p. 133)

Halbfass (1991a) notes that in classical Vaiśeṣika doctrines of Praśastapāda, the "unseen" or *adṛṣṭa* is a comprehensive term such that under its mantle, merit and demerit (*dharma* and *adharma*) are but 2 of the 24 qualities (*guṇa*) of various substances (*padārtha*). "The integration of dharma and adharma into the list of guṇas is a symptomatic step," says Halbfass, "in the process of the final systematization of Vaiśeṣika and in its attempted merger of soteriology and 'physics' " (p. 311). He also points out that in the Nyāya system, which is usually considered to be the twin of Vaiśeṣika, atoms (*aṇu*) as well as minds (*manas*) are conceived of as having a kinetic force attributed to the "unseen." It is interesting to note that in the Vaiśeṣika system of Praśastapāda, this force is categorized into various kinds including continuous pressure (*nodana*), impact (*abhighāta*), and persistent tendency, which is called *saṁskāra* (Seal, n.d./1985, pp. 134–136). As we shall see, the idea of *saṁskāra* is central to the Yogic conception of the connection between actions and their future consequences.

The attempt by the Vaiśesika school to include physical phenomena such as motion under the mantle of the Law of Karma shows that there was a strong tendency to conceive of retributive justice as a cosmic principle conceived in a thoroughly naturalistic sense. Their approach implied several presuppositions: The first one may be called the "conservation of karma," meaning that there is neither disappearance of the effects of any action (*kṛtavipraṇāśa*), nor any appearance of undeserved suffering or well-being (*akṛtābhyāgama*). This, in turn, implies the second presupposition that there is no interference in the distribution of rewards and punishments by a supernatural agency such as God who could grant amnesty to the wicked or bestow grace on undeserving devotees. As noted in Chapter 2, the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (6.11) viewed God as merely an overseer of the Law of Karma without the power to interfere in its operation. The third presupposition is that the Law of Karma should be applicable to all creatures in the universe as suggested in the Sanskrit expression "from Brahmā to the tufts of grass" (*brahmādistambaparyanta*). As noted by Halbfass (1991a), extending the Law of Karma to the entire domain of living beings required the recognition of awareness among all forms of life, since retribution for good or bad actions cannot take place unless a creature can feel pain and pleasure in one form or another. The similarity between human beings and animals in feeling pleasure and pain seemed obvious to ancient Indians as it does to many of us today; comparisons between human beings and animals are commonplace in Sanskrit writings on diverse topics such as dramatics where emotions among human beings and animals are compared, or in Yoga where the training of the human mind is compared with teaching animals by rewarding them. Moreover, the conceptualization of the entire animal kingdom in a graded series of varied forms of life has been an integral part of the traditional Indian worldview.

The idea of hierarchical grading of varied forms of life appears in Indian thought in many different ways. For instance, according to a highly popular myth, Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the world in the Hindu "trinity," appeared on earth in a series of incarnations in the form of a fish, a turtle, a boar, a lion-headed man, and a dwarf, before appearing as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa as near-perfect and perfect manifestations of the spirit (*puruṣa*), respectively. The lining up of species in this myth is suggestive of a hierarchy of life forms with an uncanny similarity with the Darwinian order of evolution. There is also a popular conception of a hierarchy of

8.4 million species and a connected assumption that a living being must ascend this ladder before being born as a human being. Such an "evolutionary" concept of the origins of humanity is integrally connected with the notion of retributive justice built into the cosmos. It is a common belief, for instance, that once an individual form of life ascends the evolutionary ladder and incarnates in the form of a human being, it is up to him or her to progress morally and spiritually so as to be rewarded with increasingly privileged forms of human and even superhuman lives, until finally qualifying for an ultimate release from the cycle of birth and death. If, however, after being born as a human being one fails to accumulate enough merit to qualify for being reborn as a human being, one is supposed to be "demoted" to lower forms of life, such as a cat, or a dog, or an insect, depending on how poorly one has conducted one's life. Once reborn into a lower form, there is no alternative but to wait until nature takes its course in upgrading the individual to successively higher forms until human form is regained. This endless game of snakes and ladders is believed to perpetuate unless one attains enlightenment, and thus escapes the drudgery once and for all.

But how far down the scale of life does the ladder extend? Surely to cows and dogs and turtles and fish, and even maggots. But how about the proverbial "blade of grass?" Are plants, too, part of the hierarchy of life forms? As noted by Halbfass (1991a, p. 323), the "five-fire doctrine" (*pañcāgnividyā*) that appears in the *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad (5.3–10) suggests a link between human beings and plants. According to this doctrine, the subtle body of a deceased person is first transformed into *soma* (juice of the Soma plant), which then transforms successively into rain, food, semen, and a human being. The *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad (1931, 5.10.1–6) describes how the subtle body of a meritorious person first ascends to the moon, where as *soma*, it becomes food for the gods:

> After having remained in it as long as there is a residue [of their good works], then by that course by which they came they return again, just as they came, into space; from space, into wind. After having become wind, one becomes smoke. After having become smoke, he becomes mist. After having become mist, he becomes cloud. After having become cloud, he rains down. They are born here as rice and barley, as herbs and trees, as sesame plants and beans. Thence, verily, indeed, it is difficult to emerge; for only if some one or other eats him as food and emits him as semen, does he develop further. (p. 233)

All this is as mysterious and fanciful as any other doctrine of life after death, whether in Indian thought or anywhere else. Yet, when compared with the supernaturalistic views of the Mīmāṁsā system, which speaks of ascending to heaven by means of magical powers whether earned by meritorious behavior or bought by paying a priest to conduct some rituals, the Upaniṣadic speculations just mentioned approach the issue of karma in a relatively naturalistic way, opening the way for an even more naturalistic approach of the Vaiśeṣika system.

As Halbfass points out, in the history of Indian thought, there have been persistent, unresolved controversies over such issues as the relation between karma and events in nature. For example, the Vaiśeṣikas and the Jains could not agree on whether plants were conscious. There were even "experiments" to find out if maggots arose in a human corpse sealed in an iron pot, for if they did, life would be shown to arise spontaneously without a soul entering into the sealed box to face punishments for past actions. Halbfass (1991a) notes several other instances of naturalistic observation and even "experiment," but concludes that over the centuries, there was an increasingly "rigid superimposition of religious and soteriological schemes and perspectives upon biological, zoological, and cosmological observations and a gradual evaporation of the spirit of observation and empirical openness for natural phenomena" (p. 320). At any rate, it should be clear that, regardless of all of its shortcomings, the general thrust of the Indian worldview was to consider the doctrine of karma as a broad principle that encompasses concepts of retributive justice as well as causality that are evenly applicable to all human affairs on the one hand and to events in the realms of meteorology, biology, and even physics on the other. Of all the varied systems of Indian thought, Patañjali's Yoga (1978) comes the closest in accounting for human behavior in "psychological" terms, and as such it deserves special attention here.

The Conception of Karma and Its Consequences in the Yoga System

It has been common in Indian thought to characterize human action in terms of its physical (*kāyika*), verbal (*vācika*), and mental (*mānasika*) dimensions. According to Patañjali's Yoga (1978), all mental events or processes (*citta vṛtti*) such as perceiving, thinking, imagining, recollecting, and so on constitute action, or karma. Each mental event is said to leave behind traces, called *saṁskāras*, which are compared to seeds. The mind (*citta*) is thought of as a receptacle in which the karmic seeds are stored for indefinite periods of time. At some later time, when proper conditions are present, the stored seeds germinate and bear fruit (*phala*) that display the distinctive mark (*añjana*) of the original actions that produced them. For instance, if the original action involved reaching out for and tasting honey, the fruition of the seeds sown by this karma might happen while visiting the forest where it was tasted, and might involve the pleasant taste of honey as well as a tendency to seek a beehive where honey might be found. On the contrary, if the original experience involved a painful contact with fire, the fruition of its traces would invoke a fearful feeling at the sight of something that looks like a flame, along with behavioral impulses to get away from it. What such examples suggest is that present behavior is determined by past experience and behavior, depending on the pleasant or unpleasant nature of the initial experiences. The basic purpose here is clearly to connect experiences and behaviors across a time span, which is what concepts such as imprints and memory "traces" accomplish in

contemporary thought. The Yogic concept of *karmāśaya* helps to do the same by invoking the metaphor of storage and retrieval of past impressions. Here the term *āśaya*, meaning a vessel, receptacle, storehouse, a resting place, or a seat, is combined with the term *karma*. Thus, the term *karmāśaya* implies a storehouse of the karmic residues, and this storehouse is considered to serve as a resting place for the soul (*puruṣa*). Dasgupta (1924/1973) mentions yet another meaning of the term *āśaya* as a vehicle, suggesting that *karmāśaya* is so called because it serves as the vehicle in which the person travels through the time tunnel, witnessing light and dark, heat or cold, pleasure or pain, in a perpetual succession of life cycles.[18]

It is easy to see that the Yogic concept of *saṁskāras* resembles the contemporary Western notion of *traces*, and the Yogic view of the way they operate resembles the behaviorist notion of *reinforcement*, insofar as both recognize the role of pleasure and pain in the shaping of future behavior. Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms (1978, 4.9) clearly attribute remembering to the reactivation of traces of events experienced earlier during the present life cycle. Moreover, Yogic theory, like modern psychology, recognizes that insofar as even newborn babies tend to avoid pain and seek pleasurable things, the origin of behavioral tendencies must be traced to events that may have occurred prior to the beginning of the present life cycle. Like the behaviorist notion of *drive*, the Yogic notion of *vāsanā* traces the origin of current behavioral tendencies to the history of the individual prior to conception. As noted, the ancient Indian thinkers, too, thought that animal and human forms of life were connected, except that they did not think of a phylogenetic order within a Darwinian model of evolution as we do in modern times. In the Yogic theory, as in the case of the traditional Indian view of karma, the human tendency to protect one's home territory from intruders was not so much of a carryover from the animal origins of human species, but rather the fructification (*vipāka*) of the seeds sown by an individual's experience in a previous incarnation as a dog. The seeds sown by experiences in a given life cycle may or may not sprout and bear fruit before the end of that life cycle; the unsprouted seeds are carried forward from the end of one life cycle to the beginning of the next. According to the Patañjali (1978, 2.13), the type of seeds that lay in store at the time of death decides the type of species (*jāti*) in which the individual will be reborn, the type of life cycle (*āyuṣ*) he or she will have, and the kind of pleasurable and painful experiences (*bhoga*) he or she will enjoy and suffer.

The foregoing account of pleasure and pain is largely naturalistic; it simply relates to the experiential concomitants of behaviors of animals including human beings, and all behaviors are considered lawfully determined. In some basic ways, such an account is fairly consistent with behaviorist views. However, the Yogic perspective is radically different from that of the behaviorists in that the former combines retributive justice with the law of nature. In Patañjali's (1978, 2.14) view, an individual experiences pleasure or pain depending on whether he or she has accumulated residues of virtuous or vicious actions (*puṇyāpuṇya hetutvāt*), respectively. Patañjali's commentator Vyāsa (4.8) clarifies that whether an individual will be reborn as a hell-born (*nāraka*), as an animal (*tiryak*), or as a human being (*manuṣya*) depends on the kind of unripened karmic seeds that await fructification (*vipāka*) in the next life. Thus, according to the Yogic worldview, individuals are promoted or demoted for their good and bad deeds by being "naturally" placed higher or lower on a hierarchical order of species. This is of course in line with the views of retributive justice shared by other systems of Indian thought as described earlier.

As we noted in the previous chapter, the primary strategy of Patañjali's Yoga is controlling one's own thought processes by means of persistent effort (*abhyāsa*) and the cultivation of dispassionateness (*vairāgya*). While the former means (effort) clearly lie in the domain of the self-as-agent, the latter fits within the sphere of the self-as-enjoyer. What Yoga expects the aspirant to do is to turn the self-as-agent against itself by slowing itself down physically and mentally until it comes to a stand still, and simultaneously get the self-as-enjoyer to withdraw from the very objects that it persistently continues to seek. This is the Yogic strategy for ending the self-perpetuating cycle of action and its consequences. But why does the cycle of action and its consequences tend to perpetuate itself? Seen from a Yogic viewpoint, the primary cause of perpetuation are the following "afflictions" that most commonly taint mental events: (1) misconstrued notions about one's selfhood—mainly mistaking transitory thoughts for the unchanging Self—(*avidyā*); (2) egoism (*asmitā*); (3) attachment (*rāga*); (4) aversion (*dveṣa*); and (5) love for life and the tendency toward the perpetuation of life (*abhiniveśa*). Thus, it is the feelings of attachment or liking for various objects and the dislike or fear for others that are primarily responsible for leaving traces behind, traces that prompt a person to seek liked things and avoid the disliked ones.

To put it in the language of freedom versus control, a person's behavior is "controlled" by past events as long as she or he remains enchanted by things enjoyed in the past and keeps avoiding unpleasant ones. A lover would surely chase his paramour as long as the love lasts; but if the relationship goes sour or if the man becomes infatuated by a different flame, then even the strongest attachment for the first love would quickly become a thing of the past. Likewise, if and when a utopian ideologist becomes disillusioned about the party's promises for a bright future, yesterday's dream can turn into today's nightmare. Against this background, it should be easy to understand why the cultivation of dispassionateness would mitigate the spell of past experience on the individual. Dispassionateness implies the diminution or blunting of the force with which one is attracted to or repelled from objects in the world. According to Yoga, as in many other forms of spiritual self-discipline, one's emotional investment can be voluntarily altered. If this is correct, then it should follow that lowering the levels of attachment would allow a person to exercise systematic control on one's own behavior.

The overall thrust of the Yogic strategy is to develop increasing levels of self-

control. The initial steps to Yoga, namely, restraints such as avoiding stealing or injury and observances such as cleanliness and study, involve control of one's general conduct in social life such as not hurting others and in matters of personal conduct in daily activities (see Table 5.2 in the previous chapter). Then, the Yogic aspirant learns to slow down the body and sit comfortably, then to slow down the physiological functions through the control of breathing. Then follows control and gradual slowing down of one's thinking and cognitive processes. When the stream of thought is brought close to a standstill, the nature of conscious experience is said to undergo a radical change. Vācaspati Miśra and Vijñāna Bhikṣu's commentaries on Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms provide detailed descriptions of a series of altered states of consciousness called the *samādhi* that are said to follow in sequential order with progress in the practice of meditation (see Paranjpe, 1984). We shall look at some aspects of the altered states of consciousness as described in Yoga in the next chapter. Here, let us note the implications for the chain of action and its consequences as relevant to the topic at hand.

According to Patañjali (1978), the experience of the initial levels of *samādhi* also leave their traces behind, and one who experiences them tends to seek more of the same since the experience is positive. However, unlike the pleasurable experiences of external objects or events, such as tasting honey, or winning a game, and so on, which generally tend to add fuel to the fire of desires and turn one's attention outward rather than inward, the *samādhi* experience prompts the Yogi to look inward for satisfaction. The very nature of the *samādhi* experience is said to be intrinsically blissful; it inheres in the Self (as-subject) and is independent of any object. That bliss is inexhaustible and it is always there to be experienced without one's having to depend on vagaries of the external world. Moreover, according to Patañjali (1978, 1.50), traces left behind by *samādhi* experiences impede the force of traces left behind by external objects. As the traces left behind by *samādhi* experiences accumulate, they strengthen the tendencies to seek inner bliss while at the same time they weaken the tendencies to seek objects of pleasure in the external world. Thus, a "positive cycle" sets in, whereby the Yogi becomes increasingly free from the binding spell of the "contingencies of reinforcement" that normally tend to impel a person to seek or avoid objects and events. Because this cycle is the opposite of the self-perpetuating chain of action and its consequences, it ultimately liberates a person from the burden of the past.

Karma Yoga: The Method of Nonattached Action in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*

In the Indian tradition, it is customary to think of three distinct "paths" to liberation: the paths of knowledge, devotion, and action (*jñāna*, *bhakti*, and *karma mārga*). The three paths involve the transformation of the self as knower, enjoyer–sufferer, and agent, respectively, and require focus on cognition, emotion, and

action, respectively. We have considered the first two in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, and we may now consider the path of action (*karma mārga*) as appropriate to the topic of this chapter. The nature of the path of action is often understood differently because the ambiguous meaning of the term *karma*. The narrower connotation of the term karma implies actions as prescribed by the earlier Vedic texts, meaning rituals aimed primarily at securing a place in the heaven. It is in this sense of the term that the system of Mīmāṁsā is sometimes viewed as espousing the path of action; it engages in the exegesis of the earlier Vedic texts, and tries to clarify the meanings of Vedic injunctions so as to enable its followers to engage in prescribed actions. In the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, however, the broader ethical connotation of the term *karma* is emphasized, and Karma Yoga is suggested as a path of action involving a skill in carrying out one's actions (*karmasu kauśalam*). The skill lies primarily in cultivating a sense of detachment in regard to the outcomes of action, whether a gain or loss. In the remainder of this section, I wish to discuss the rationale of nonattached action (*niṣkāma karma*) as a technique of self-transformation leading to liberation from the chain of actions and their consequences.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* describes more than a dozen approaches to liberation, each called a "yoga." Of these many yogas, the Yoga of renunciation of action (*karma saṁnyāsa yoga*) recommends disengaging from actions in family and community life, and thus contrasts sharply with Karma Yoga, which recommends active engagement as opposed to renunciation. In the Indian tradition, disengagement or renunciation (*nivṛtti*) and active engagement with social roles in family and community (*pravṛtti*) have been proposed as alternative ways of dealing with action in life. Disengagement implies resigning from roles and responsibilities in family, kin, and community and accepting the life of a renouncer (*saṁnyāsin*) and being a recluse, a hermit, an anchorless ascetic, or a wandering monk devoted to study, contemplation, and teaching. Such a role is sanctioned in the Indian culture, and there are institutional arrangements to support them in a manner comparable to those of monks in hermitages in the West. Renunciation implies that one stops acting in the varied roles within the family and community, and thus is freed from the chain of consequences following from all the actions that would otherwise be carried out in those capacities. Such disengagement would be a way to liberation, since no actions means having no consequences and therefore no bondage, thereby moving toward liberation. But nonaction is merely a logical possibility and not a practical one, since even the hermit must act in one way or another as long as he or she lives. Therefore, even a renouncer needs a strategy to act in a way to attain release from the chain of action and its consequences.

Traditionally, the lifestyle of a renouncer has been considered appropriate for those who take the path of knowledge (*Jñāna Yoga*) to liberation, since the renunciate can afford full-time devotion to the task of study and contemplation. There are of course stalwarts such as Śaṅkara who strongly advocate knowledge as the only means to liberation, and within its context dismiss the role of action as a

subsidiary at best. Many others recommend a combination of knowledge, devotion, and action depending on what suits a particular individual's temperament (*svabhāva*) and circumstances in life. Against this background, Niṣkāma Karma Yoga (often simply called Karma Yoga) provides an approach with the strongest emphasis on action, and relatively less on devotion and knowledge as preferred by the aspirant. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* is probably the best source for the explanation of Karma Yoga, and B. G. Tilak is clearly one of its staunchest advocates and defenders in modern times. My account of the rationale of Karma Yoga in the following pages depends heavily on the *Gītā* and on *Bhagavad-Gītā-Rahasya*, which is the name of Tilak's commentary on the *Gītā* (Tilak, 1915/1971).

The rationale of Karma Yoga as expounded in the *Gītā* rests primarily on the idea that it is the hankering (*saṅga*, *āsakti*) for rewards or the fruits of action that "binds" us to the chain of actions and their consequences. The stronger the longing for specific outcomes, the greater the effort a person is ready to invest in attaining them; and the greater the effort, the higher the chances of being drawn into unintended results and their consequences. On the contrary, if one does not care for any results at all, then one is not likely to do anything. However, it is not possible to live without doing anything at all, and it makes little sense to act without any expectation at all, since complete lack of expectation would simply mean totally random or mindless activity. Moreover, most aspirants for liberation are likely to find themselves strongly involved at least in some personal projects that are important in their lives. Against this background, the strategy of Karma Yoga is to start cultivating affective neutrality, i.e., to start trying not to get very excited about what one might gain or lose as result of intended actions. Affective neutrality makes a good deal of practical sense, since effective action requires an optimum level of concern for success; both very high or very low levels of concern are detrimental to success. However, the aim of Karma Yoga is not simply to foster higher levels of efficiency by performing at optimum levels of involvement and anxiety; its ultimate aim is to continue performing one's duties with an increasing sense of detachment so that one stops being driven by the outcome of one's actions and ultimately escapes from the chain of action and its consequences. To that end, it requires an understanding of the nature of action and its consequences in addition to the deliberate and systematic lessening of one's emotional investment in the outcome of action.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (18.14) provides such an understanding through a careful analysis of the various factors that determine success in a course of action and helps promote self-understanding in relation to action. As noted in the previous chapter, it points out that the agent is but one of several factors in producing an outcome and identifies four other factors involved, namely the context of action, the instruments of various sorts, various kinds of effort, and finally, chance or "fate" (*daiva*).[19] It also points out (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, 3.27) that events in the phenomenal world (*Prakṛti*) keep happening according to the inexorable laws of

nature over which we have no control, and yet we think egotistically and assign more credit or blame to ourselves for success and failure than we deserve.[20] This idea is essentially the same as A. G. Greenwald's (1980) notion of "beneffectance," i.e., a tendency to take credit for success regardless of whether one deserves it or not, which was discussed in Chapter 4. The difference is that, unlike Greenwald who refrains from drawing moralistic conclusions from his observations, Kṛṣṇa exhorts Arjuna in the *Gītā* (2.47) to stop being attached to the fruits of action. For, he says, it is only your own actions over which you have control, never the outcomes; so let not the fruits be your motive for action, nor let yourself slither into inaction.[21]

Tilak (1915/1971) tried to explain and popularize the doctrines of nonattached action as expounded in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* during the early years of the 20th century. A journalist trying hard to raise his voice against a foreign rule during the heyday of the British empire, he tried to convey to his countrymen that the message of the teaching of the *Gītā* was not one of renunciation, but of being involved in the practical affairs of the society. Such involvement was obviously relevant to the fight against a foreign rule, even as Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to Arjuna was in the war of his times. Aside from the political implications for the teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to Tilak's life and times, his interpretation brings out the relevance of detached action for any person in any culture and era. Karma Yoga as expounded in the *Gītā* may be viewed as a "technology of the self," with a focus on action, although the role of emotion and cognition in it is not negligible. The key to success in the practice of Karma Yoga is in the cultivation of affective neutrality through cognitive means, such as understanding the role of egotistic tendencies in assigning undeserved credit for success or blame for failure. Tilak's particular interpretation of the doctrines of the *Gītā* has been criticized on various grounds: for his overemphasis on action to the relative neglect of knowledge as a means to liberation and for implying that his approach was consistent with that of Śaṅkara, who advocated knowledge as the only means to liberation. It is also suggested that the very idea of detachment is inconsistent with the focus on action, since it makes little sense to undertake a course of action without any expectation of specific outcomes.

Adoption of the nonattached stance implies letting things happen and being a witness to the course of events without at the same time foregoing meaningful action. With the cultivation of such a stance, a person can learn to be guided not by egoistic goals, but by the value of service to society (*loka-saṁgraha*), as suggested by the *Gītā*. A person who successfully practices nonattached karma is said to become gradually released from the egoistic strivings that tie the agent to the chain of consequences and ultimately to become released from its fetters. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (5.10) uses the metaphor of the lotus leaf that floats in water but remains untouched by it to describe a person who lives in the sea of social action without getting entangled by its trappings.

Understanding the Doctrine of Karma in View of Contemporary Indian Concerns and Western Perspectives

The doctrine of karma has provided the foundation for the social ethos in India for ages. As noted, except for a very small minority of the materialist followers of Cārvāka, the doctrine of karma has been accepted by almost all schools of thought and religious denominations that originated in India. The pervasiveness of the teaching of this doctrine does not imply that vast numbers of people in the Indian subcontinent have been seriously practicing the preaching based on such principles. In current times, in particular, there are several issues and concerns that question and undermine people's belief in the doctrine of karma. While secularization and popularity of the worldview of science tends to weaken faith in "religious" beliefs, widespread corruption and social malaise directly challenge belief in a just world ensconced in any worldview, secular or religious. A more serious challenge to the belief in the doctrine of karma arises from the reaction of the members of the lower castes, who had long reconciled themselves to their inferior status as a just result from their alleged demerit acquired in previous lives. As noted in Chapter 2, such justification is no longer acceptable in light of the currently popular value of egalitarian beliefs. Indeed, seen from the vantage point of the members of the lower castes, such an interpretation of the doctrine of karma is a device used by the upper castes, especially the Brahmins, to gain undue advantages at the cost of the lower castes. This issue of the clash between egalitarianism versus the caste system supported by the doctrine of karma deserves closer examination. To that end, let me cite some data from a survey of attitudes and beliefs regarding the doctrine of karma among members of different caste groups.

The study in question aimed at assessing the attitudes and opinions of members of various caste groups about a variety of issues concerning the caste system. It was conducted in the Western city of Pune in the mid-1960s (see Paranjpe, 1970), and the participants were some 500 college students. To help assess the significance of the hierarchical distribution of status and privileges across the caste groups, about one third of the respondents were drawn from each of the Brahmin, Maratha, and Harijan (ex-untouchables, currently called Dalit) caste groups placed at the top, the middle, and the bottom of the caste hierarchy, respectively. The following was one of the statements to which the students were asked to express their agreement or disagreement: "It is proper to bear without complaining our current miseries as rightful dues for our deeds in previous life." It should be clear that such an attitude is a corollary of the doctrine of karma, and that its acceptance by members of the underprivileged castes is essential for the perpetuation of the caste system. In response to this statement, about 30% of students of the privileged Brahmin castes agreed, while almost 50% disagreed, and the rest were neutral. By comparison, only 17% of members of the ex-untouchable

castes agreed while 60% disagreed with the same statement. In an effort to assess their level of support to the doctrine of rebirth, students were asked to express their agreement or disagreement to the statement "I believe in the doctrine of rebirth." About 35% Brahmins expressed belief in the doctrine of rebirth, and a little less than 30% rejected the idea. By comparison, while 13% of the ex-untouchable castes expressed their belief in the idea or rebirth, over 60% expressed disbelief. Predictably, members of the Maratha caste in the middle of the caste hierarchy were in between the upper and lower castes in their level of disagreement with these statements (see Paranjpe, 1970, pp. 51–53). These data clearly indicate that among the youth studied, by and large, disbelief in the doctrine of karma was more common than belief, and that such disbelief was more common among members of the lower castes than among those of the higher castes. The limitations of these data are obvious: they are restricted to a sample of college youth and may not be generalizable to the wider society. Also, these observations are fairly outdated. I have not been able to obtain more recent and more representative data on such issues. However, given that the reaction of the underprivileged castes against the differentials is steadily increasing over the decades as indicated by the substantial political gains of parties supported by Dalits and "other backward castes," it would be fair to guess that belief in the doctrine of karma, which tended to justify the privileges, would also be on the decline.

Be that as it may, it should be clear that the doctrine of karma and the corollary belief in reincarnation are inextricably connected with the desire to see the world as a just place. Belief in rebirth is necessary to protect the just world hypothesis implicit in the doctrine of karma, just as belief in the Day of Judgment is necessary to ensure belief in a similar hypothesis within the Christian worldview. However, since the doctrine of karma and the belief in rebirth have been used to justify social inequities of the caste system, this doctrine and belief have come to signify injustice, which is ironically the exact opposite of what they were originally supposed to stand for. This does not mean that the doctrine of karma and the belief in rebirth necessarily entail the justification of inequality. Indeed, Gautama Buddha as well as several other religious reformers such as Guru Nanak rejected caste-based inequities without discarding either the Law of Karma or the belief in rebirth. Ironically, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the greatest leader of the Dalit community and the strongest fighter for equality, converted millions of his followers to Buddhism, which has always accepted the doctrine of karma as an integral part of its worldview. In his book, *Buddha and His Dhamma*, Ambedkar (1957/1992, pp. 329–344) explains what the Buddha meant when he spoke of rebirth and karma, and shows how the Buddhist views differed from the Brahmanical views of karma. He also tries to interpret Buddha's views of rebirth and karma in the light of the modern scientific conceptions of heredity and environment as determinants of human behavior. It is not necessary for us to examine how well the traditional perspectives are interpreted in Dr. Ambedkar's writings and how he interprets

them in the light of modern science. Suffice it to note that in his view, "[t]he basis of the Hindu doctrine of past karma as the regulator of future life is an iniquitous doctrine.... The only purpose one can think of [for it] is to enable the state or the society to escape responsibility for the condition of the poor and the lowly" (p. 344). It hardly would be surprising that Dr. Ambedkar's neo-Budhhist[22] followers strongly endorse the principle of equality while at the same time rejecting the doctrine of karma altogether.

In his autobiographical account previously mentioned, S. K. Thorat (1979), a follower of Dr. Ambedkar, notes that he rejected the stigmatized identity as a Mahar, i.e., a member of a caste formerly considered untouchable, and asserts that "I accept the principles of social justice, equality, fraternity, and the like" (p. 78). These principles are the watchwords of the modern liberal democratic ethos reverberating around the world since the late 18th century, thanks to the legacy of the French Revolution. It is hardly surprising that they express the sentiments of people who have been victimized by inequalitarian systems anywhere and everywhere in the world today. Following his just-quoted words, Thorat (1979) adds: "I reject belief in the *karma* theory based on past deeds, reincarnation of souls, in Gods and rituals" (p. 78; emphasis original). The point is that, given the centrality of the principle of equality in today's world, including contemporary India, the doctrine of karma may no longer continue to be a central feature of the Indian worldview and the backbone of its social ethos as it had been throughout history.

The assumption that the world is a just place makes little if any sense to the countless dispossessed, victimized, and exploited people of the world. Indeed, for many such people, the world *is* an unjust place. Moreover, in India today as in certain other parts of the world where corruption has become the order of the day, the very concept of justice starts to lose sense. It is of course possible to make sense of life without belief in the just world hypothesis. There are many varied worldviews that are neutral to moral considerations; the worldview of science is an obvious and common one. Given the increasing spread of education and the steady march of science and technology, it is conceivable that the worldview of science might come to dominate and be widely shared in India, and perhaps in the rest of the world as well. Moreover, within academe, the worldview of science has ostensibly already become the order of the day.

The Doctrine of Karma from the Vantage Point of the Worldview of Science

There is an ironic similarity between the worldview of science and the traditional Indian worldview: Both assume that all events in the entire universe are governed by ironclad laws of causality. Moreover, the traditional Indian worldview conceives of a continuum of life forms that function within a universal order similar to the Darwinian notion of the evolutionary order. The main difference is that in the Indian worldview causality extends beyond the natural world to the moral domain. Such mixing up of the natural and moral domains is clearly an anathema to the worldview of science. It is my impression that there are two distinctive aspects of the development of the worldview of science in the West, whereby the gulf between the natural and moral domains has grown very wide. The first one is that, in the intellectual history of the West, God was considered to be the guardian of moral order, an idea common and central to Judaism, Christianity, as well as Islam. It was He who would punish the sinners and reward the meritorious on the Great Day. The fact that science developed in 16th- and 17th-century Europe in the teeth of opposition from the Church seems to me to be at least partly responsible for the rift between not only science and religion, but also between science and ethics. Second, since the 18th century when David Hume drew a sharp line between the "is" and the "ought," it has been supposed that science will deal exclusively with facts and have nothing at all to do with values.

When modern science emerged in Europe during the 17th century, its views on various matters such as the sun rather than the earth as the center of the world conflicted with the established Christian worldview, and the conflict was epitomized by the inquisition of Galileo (see Russell, 1935/1961). This conflict continued until the middle of the 19th century when Darwin proposed the evolutionary origins of human beings, a theory that challenged the biblical view of the creation of man by God. As debates over evolutionism versus creationism continue on university campuses, at least in North America, scientists by and large wish to have nothing to do with religion. Insofar as the Church often claims to have authority over moral issues, next to God, scientists tend to keep away from discussions of ethics and value as well. Besides, ever since science started to receive funding from royalty (as in the case of support to the Royal Society of London founded in 1662), scientists were supposed to refrain from participation in politics. Later, when science started to receive funding from democratically elected governments, it made even less sense for scientists to support one political ideology or religious sect over another. Publicly funded educational instutution understandably tend to be value neutral, since no matter what values you support, they often tend to please some groups but offend others.

Looking at the issue of the relationship between science and religion in the global context, it is necessary to note that the conflict between them is a product of the specific features of intellectual history of Europe, which are not obtained in the East. Two major themes of the worldview of science that are at the center of its conflict with the Church, namely the heliocentric view of the universe and the theory of evolution, do not militate against the worldviews of Eastern religions. As far as I know, the introduction of science in Asia has not been offensive to any established sensibilities. It is difficult to convey to many Westerners the simple fact that classical Buddhism and Jainism are atheistic, since from their viewpoint, atheist religion is an oxymoron. Even some Hindus are aghast when they discover

that some of the influential philosophical systems, such as the Sāṅkhya system, which dominates the conceptual framework of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, has no place for God. Even in Advaita Vedānta, which is not explicitly atheistic, the role of God is limited to that of a mere purveyor of the moral order with no power to intervene. In most Indian systems of thought, God plays a limited, if any, role; He does not dictate moral law, or sit in judgment, or dispense rewards and punishments. The Law of Karma is believed to keep order in the moral domain without any help from God or without any interference from Him.

I know of no Sanskrit expression of which the "Law of Karma" is an exact translation; the term "law" has been added in the English translation of the term "karma," which in and of itself conveys the notion of lawfulness in the moral domain. In one of his early papers, Karl H. Potter (1964) referred to karma as a "naturalistic principle," and explained which of the different meanings of the English word "law" were applicable in its context. In the context of the doctrine of karma, he explained, the term "law" does *not* imply either a prescriptive principle or a rule of conduct, nor does it mean an empirical generalization such as Newton's law or Boyle's law in the natural sciences. Potter (1964) points out, correctly in my opinion, that the Law of Karma is a principle like the "Law of Causation," or better still a "hypothesis," such as "every event has a cause." Unlike an empirical hypothesis, which is in principle falsifiable, its "apparent falsifications are disallowed in principle" (p. 39).

Contemporary psychology tends to favor a Newtonian conception of causality and lawfulness as a matter of empirical generalization, rather than a Kantian notion of causality as an *a priori* principle. Newton's laws lend themselves to empirical verification on the basis of repeatable observations; they are statable as universal generalizations to which exceptions are virtually nonexistent. Apples keep falling to the ground rather than flying in the air, and when claims suggestive of exceptions are made, such as Yogic claims about levitation, then an attempt is made to falsify the claim rather than question the principle. It is fairly safe to predict that the next apple that will ripen on the apple tree in my yard will necessarily fall to the ground as the hundreds I have seen, hundreds of thousands that others have seen, and the zillions that are presumed to have fallen throughout history. However, as Hume pointed out, empirical generalizations about natural phenomena such as falling apples cannot be guaranteed to perpetuate forever. Necessity, like the concept of causality itself, is not given in experience; it is added by the mind that expects that regularities observed in the past will persist in the future. Halbfass (1991) has pointed out that karma is a principle of causal explanation in the Kantian sense, i.e., as "Erklären" or as "derivation from a principle which one must be able to comprehend and state clearly" (pp. 295–296). The notions such as "every action has its inevitable consequences," or that "nobody suffers except for one's own bad deeds" that are implicit in the Law of Karma are clearly principles that help make sense of order in the moral domain, just as

principles of causality and necessity are principles that help make sense of the course of events in nature.

Symbolic Worlds and the Is–Ought Distinction

In Chapter 1, we briefly encountered Peter L. Berger's concept of the symbolic worlds: the abstract cosmic conceptions of reality within which our social, religious, and scientific views of the world are ensconced. The Law of Karma is a crucial aspect of the symbolic world shared by a vast majority of Indians throughout the millennia. It attempts to cover everything everywhere and at all times: all kinds of events in the physical, biological, mental, and moral domains. In pre-Enlightenment Europe, God's law was believed to apply to the natural as well as the moral spheres. Isaac Newton thought that he was discovering the laws that God had laid down for everything in Nature. Somewhere around the 17th through the 19th centuries, however, in the Western tradition, the domains of the natural and the supernatural, of science and theology, of facts and values, started to be sharply defined as separate. As noted, the Law of Karma does not entail any supernaturalism; indeed, it is a fiercely naturalistic principle that works without the interference of God. It is my impression that joining the natural and moral order into a single grand order militates against the worldview of science. The basic issue here is the distinction between the "is" and "ought," fact and value.

Ever since Hume (1739/1978, p. 469) made a clear-cut distinction between the domains of the "is" versus the "ought," we have tended to make an equally sharp division between the descriptive and prescriptive laws. Philosophers may still dispute the exact nature, meaning, and legitimacy of the is–ought distinction,[23] but many of us take the division for granted. Seen from this post-Humean vantage point, the Indian conception of karma would seem to hopelessly mix the "is" with the "ought." Trying to deduce conditions about how the world putatively is from how we think it ought to be constitutes, we are told, the naturalistic fallacy, which of course is a pitfall to be avoided at any cost.

If the Law of Karma were to operate as it is supposed to, then life in some form must continue after death; as noted, rebirth is not just a corollary but a necessary corollary of the Law of Karma. But is there any evidence to support the belief in reincarnation? Over the past several years, Ian Stevenson (1975) has been searching for empirical evidence for reincarnation by investigating numerous reported cases of such. Regardless of the numerous methodological problems in collecting information and validating claims in such matters, there are two strikes against such an endeavor that tend to dismiss the whole idea. First, the very concept of reincarnation is an anathema in terms of the contemporary worldview of science, and on that basis the issue is a nonstarter. Second, the idea of doing research in such a field is taboo to the extent that, like people doing research in parapsychology, anyone doing research in this field is assigned to a position of an

outcast even beyond the fringe. Third, even if one were to set aside the taboos that tend to dismiss the very idea of reincarnation, the kind of information that one comes across in the putative cases of reincarnation as presented by Stevenson and other researchers in the field tends to be anecdotal and may not be admissible as evidence in accordance with contemporary scientific standards. But how about the question of evidence for the belief in reincarnation within the Indian tradition?

Interestingly, so far I have not come across any discussion of evidence supporting the idea of reincarnation in either traditional or contemporary writings on the Law of Karma. Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's aphorisms (2.12–14), which is one of the sources that offers detailed discussion of the concept of reincarnation, makes a tangential reference about the sources of evidence on such matters in his comments on the universal tendency to cling to life and the fear of death manifest among living beings. The fear of death, in particular, Vyāsa (2.9) suggests, cannot be attributed to knowledge gained either through direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), or inference (*anumāna*), or the testimony of the scriptures (*āgama*). The reasoning behind this suggestion should be clear. It makes no sense to imagine that a living being could have ever had the direct experience of dying—unless he or she is assumed to have lived and died prior to being reborn. Of course it may be granted that one who has seen others dying could *infer* that she or he, too, will die one day, and view that as a fearful prospect. One could also say that those who believe in scriptures may understand what it means to die, since God or angels whose words appear in the Scriptures may be assumed to know the meaning of death. However, fear of death must be inborn rather than inferred or learned, for it is not simply grown-ups who have thought about the possibility of one's own death, or learned persons who have read and believed in scriptures, who are afraid of death; even babies as well as lowly organisms seem to be afraid of dying. Thus, argues Vyāsa, the only way to make sense of the universality of the fear of death is to grant that all organisms must have experienced death sometime before birth. As can be seen, this argument incidentally offers a typically deductive proof of the idea of reincarnation. Such discussion of the evidence supporting the idea of reincarnation is rare in the history of Indian thought.[24] Given that the major schools (and even their minor branches) have not only discussed the criteria of validation of knowledge claims, but have often engaged in fierce debates over the issue of evidence (*pramāṇa carcā*), how does one make sense of the lack of attention to the problem of evidence regarding reincarnation? My guess is that the belief in reincarnation has been a cardinal assumption of the Indian tradition; it is so central and so much taken for granted that even raising the issue of evidence probably seemed quite unthinkable.

With this issue we come to the upper limit of the gulf between the traditional Indian and modern scientific worldviews. While the traditional Indian worldview tries to bring the "is" and the "ought" under a single mantle, the symbolic world of modern science insists on keeping them separate. In the Indian worldview the

assumption of a just world as it "ought" to be is taken for granted, and elaborate conceptions of nature are fashioned to suit the just world hypothesis. In sharp contrast, in the worldview of science, attention is focused on describing how the world "is," and issues of how things ought to be are often subordinated to the task of observation and analysis of facts. Yet, the advocates of applied science wish to use the knowledge of facts to bring the present state of the world closer to the way it "ought" to be. Psychologists committed to "science" not only try to avoid discussion of issues about values, ethics, and ideals, but also tend to marginalize the concepts of personhood, agency, character, and so on. While the public at large continues to consider human beings as persons with rights and responsibilities, psychologists go about the business of studying human behavior as if the issues of rights and responsibilities did not even exist. As Rychlak and Rychlak (1990) have pointed out, while "[t]he Law presumes that human beings have free will ... many psychiatrists and psychologists who act as expert witnesses ... have been trained to believe that human beings are without free will" (p. 3). They point out how, in regard to the issue of insanity defense where psychology's interests intersect with those of law, there is a great disparity between the assumptions of psychologists and psychiatrists on the one hand and those of lawyers and judges on the other.

Personhood, Agency, and Permanence

Before closing this chapter on self-as-agent, it is necessary to consider some issues about agency in relation to person, self, and identity. First, it may be emphasized that, as noted by Charles Taylor (1985), personhood mainly implies agency; only a human being who is guided by a purpose and is able act intentionally can be held responsible for what he or she does. Following Harry Frankfurt's (1971) seminal essay, Taylor notes that human beings are not the only ones to act purposefully or to make choices; animals too have the capacity to choose among alternatives. A rock lying at the bottom of the hill would be both unaware of the avalanche coming down the mountain and unable to move, but a fawn or a rabbit would not only recognize the danger from the falling debris but would most surely "choose" to move away from it. Even learning theorists during the heyday of behaviorism spoke of the rats in mazes making "choices," although they were keen to avoid "anthropomorphism" of all sorts and would not touch the concept of free will with a ten-foot pole. Now even robots can be trusted to make a series of intelligent choices to help manufacture a car. According to Frankfurt, what makes human beings different from animals is not the ability to make choices or that they have desires, but the ability to choose among their choices and desires. Frankfurt uses the term "second-order desires" to refer to the relative evaluation of various types of desires that human beings often make.

According to Taylor, these judgments are concerned with the qualitative

worth of different desires. Thus, I have a desire to lie down and take it easy this evening and also a desire to do some exercise to help keep myself fit. Surely I must weigh the two desires against each other, and the evaluation is clearly qualitative in nature, not quantitative. It is to indicate the qualitative distinction that ancient Greek philosophers distinguished between the pleasurable and the Good, and the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (2.1–2) makes a similar distinction between *preyas* and *śreyas*. In the Western tradition, Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian conception of "hedonic calculus" (Bentham, 1780/1962) introduced the notion that desires can be distinguished simply on a quantitative basis, and many psychologists, several behaviorists among them, followed suit. The human ability to judge the qualitative worth of varied desires is a precondition for membership in a civil community guided by an ethos. In a community guided by an ethos, each individual's actions must be judged in terms of the community's shared values. Much of this is a matter of common sense; the reason why it needs to be spelled out and affirmed is that those who were trained in disciplines committed to the "Plastic Man" viewpoint seemed to simply ignore the obvious.

If Brian Little is correct in saying that a conative revolution is underway in psychology, then the dominance of the Plastic Man model is receding and the concept of the Autonomous Man is back. If this is correct, then it is time for the return to psychological studies of concepts such as purpose and agency, as well as value as a principle guiding agentic action. As noted by Little, a person's desires may be translated into a variety of "personal projects" or planned actions explicitly or implicitly guided by values and qualitative distinctions among desires. Personal projects may be as trivial as feeding a cat, as short and simple as writing a note to mother, or as ambitious and long term as obtaining a PhD, winning a gold medal in the Olympics, or becoming a prime minister of a country. Some of the ambitious projects may symbolize a person's desired "future selves," as Hazel Markus calls them. The future selves reflect a person's values, or Frankfurtian "second-order desires." According to Taylor, our fundamental evaluations, or core values, define our identity. It is in this sense that Erikson views identity and ideology as two aspects of the same entity, namely the self-in-society. A person's ideology, i.e., a set of relatively integrated core values, *define* a person; they involve principles that a person *stands for*. Imagine a young nationalist who is willing to live or die for her country. She might be equally prepared to carry out a suicidal bomb attack on the country's enemy, or to live a life dedicated to serve its poor. Or think of a scientist who dedicates decades of her or his life to exploring secrets of the galaxies or to finding a cure for cancer. Such persons are *agentic* in the fullest sense; they have defined what kind of a life is *worth* living, and they have chosen a personal project that is carried out over long periods of time. The purpose of citing such examples is not to naively sing hymns of praise for idealism; it is to bring out the fuller implications of the agentic nature of human beings.

Being agentic involves being persistent; one who desires to accomplish a major personal project must strive to work at it until the goal is reached. Even a person who sets out to do something as simple as feeding the cat must look for the cat food in the container, scoop up a portion of the cat chow, put it in the dish, and perhaps even make a trip to the pet shop and fetch more supplies if the container is empty. In other words, even the simplest projects require us to undertake a series of meaningfully ordered steps over a period of time, and most of all, not to be distracted by anything else until the project is completed. Most people have the capacity to undertake and carry out projects that need persistence over fairly long periods of time. Obtaining an education, keeping a job, and raising children are projects that most people undertake, and these take years to complete. During the period of completion of such projects a person must set a series of goals in sequential patterns that are too familiar to need description. Throughout the period of completion of such personal projects, a person must monitor success and failure, plan and execute tasks specific to one stage, complete and wind up the current stage, and then move on to the next stage or to the next project as relevant. Each individual must be a planner, manager, and executive of his or her personal projects. Understanding of and commitment to values are necessary to provide meaning, direction, organization, and stability to our long-term projects and to guide and sustain our efforts over the long haul.

Again, all this is a matter of common sense; we do not need a psychologist or a philosopher to tell us this. But sometimes it is necessary to remind ourselves of this commonsense understanding, because we tend to take it for granted and ignore some of the logical implications of the nature of human agency. Note, for instance, some of the implications of human agency that Husserl (1933/1977, pp. 66–67) points out. While it is true that our undertakings in life require value decisions and volitional commitments that persist over time, it is also true that we may get disillusioned about our projects, give up our deepest convictions we have sustained for decades, and even undo things accomplished after a lot of effort. We cannot only go ahead with a personal project, we can also turn back in reverse. It is this ability to radically change our projects as well as values that Husserl emphasized. Indeed, there are notable instances in history of radical reversal. Paul, who was once a zealous guardian of the Jewish faith and had set out to destroy Jesus and his "heresies," experienced a radical conversion overnight. The conversion turned an archenemy of Jesus into his greatest disciple and defender. In our own times, Milovan Djilas (1973), a youthful Yugoslav revolutionary who became a high-ranking official of the Communist party, later became one of the party's staunchest critics. The point to make is not that ideological conversions occur, but that while the self-as-agent must persist over long periods of time to undertake and complete some common personal projects, there must be something in the individual that would survive the making and unmaking of the longest and most involved projects. Persons who undergo major conversions or even radical reversals have an unmistakably selfsame "I" to fall back on. There must be in all persons an unchanging

Self that lies beyond the most fickle as well as the most stubborn and lasting self-as-agent.

Notes

1. For an account of the debate between B. F. Skinner and Carl Rogers, see Rogers and Skinner (1956) and Wann (1964). For a recent round of this debate (between W. Mischel and J. F. Rychlak), see Wandersman, Poppen, and Ricks (1976, pp. 119–170).
2. For a concise account of the historical conceptions of determinism, see R. Taylor (1967). A detailed analysis of the varied conceptions of freedom is given in Mortimore Adler's (1958) *Idea offreedom* (2 vols.). Malcolm Westcott (1988) provides a comprehensive overview of various positions on the freedom–determinism issue in contemporary psychology.
3. For various works of Aristotle, see *The Works of Aristotle* (Ross, 1952).
4. In *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, while explaining the concept of "Being-Psychology" or the "Psychology of perfection," Maslow (1971, p. 133) explicitly mentions Aristotle's ideas of causality and cites the Aristotelian metaphor of an acorn growing into an oak as an instance of the process of "Becoming," or self-actualization.
5. For an English translation, see S. Radhakrishnam (1960/1968, pp. 363–365).
6. Bacon (1860) repeats the same idea of "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed" at the beginning of his *Novum Organum*, aphorism III (Vol. 4, p. 47).
7. The public nature of scientific inquiry is consistent with the view that it involves the social construction of reality. However, it is doubtful if Bacon held a social constructionist position.
8. It is interesting that in launching such a strong attack against Aristotle's teleology, Hobbes falls back on another principle that Aristotle himself had clearly stated, namely, that "nothing moves unless moved by something else." Hobbes's (1655/1839) own words echoing this Peripatetic principle are: "For as it is true, that nothing is moved by itself; so it is true also that nothing is moved but by that which is already moved" (p. 412).
9. See Descartes (1641/1911, p. 267).
10. Descartes uses this metaphor in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641/1911, p. 192).
11. For Descartes's view of the role of animal spirits in mind–body interaction, see his *Passions of the Soul*, particularly, Article XXXIV (1646/1911, Vol. 1, p. 347).
12. I have elsewhere (in Paranjpe, 1983) discussed the similarities between the triune ontological categories of the Sāṅkhya system and the three "worlds" as construed by Karl Popper (Popper & Eccles, 1977).
13. Kohlberg (1984) says the following: "My philosophic conception of moral judgment has been based on principles of justice and has depended upon the theories of Kant and of Rawls (1971) to justify the principles of the highest stages" (p. 401).
14. I am deeply indebted to Professor Joseph Rychlak for the philosophical perspective on the historical analysis of Western ideas of causality and freedom presented in this chapter and for the valuable comments on an earlier draft.
15. In this connection, Śaṅkara's words (1980, 1.1.2.2) are:

    kartumakartumanyathā vā kartuṁ śakyaṁ laukikaṁ vaidikaṁ ca karma, yathāśvena gacchati, padbhyāmanyathā vā, na vā gacchatīti |

16. In this connection, Śaṅkara says (1980, 2.3.14.37):

    apicārthakriyāyāmapi nātyantamātmanaḥ svātantryamasti deśakālanimittaviśeṣāpekṣatvāt |

17. This essay is a revised version of Halbfass's earlier essay on the topic published in a book on karma edited by Wendy O'Flaherty (1980).
18. Dasgupta (1924/1973) explains this meaning of the term *āśaya* with the following expression in Sanskrit: "āśerate sāṁsārikā purushā asmin niti āśayaḥ" (p. 103). He does not indicate its source. The use of the term *purusha* here is ambiguous, since in classical Sāṅkhya as well as Yoga, it is not *puruṣa*, but the intellect (*buddhi*) that enjoys and suffers.
19. This is a paraphrase of the following words in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (18.14):

    adhiṣṭhānaṁ tathā kartā | karaṇaṁ ca pṛthagvidham |
    vividhāś ca pṛthak ceṣṭā | daivam caivā'tra pañcamam | |

20. The words in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (3.27) are:

    prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni | guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |
    ahaṃkāravimūḍhātmā | kartā 'hamiti manyate | |

21. This is a paraphrase of the following words in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (2.47):

    karmaṇyevādhikāraste | mā phaleṣu kadācana |
    mā karmaphalaheturbhūr | mā te saṁgo'stvakarmaṇi | |

22. The label neo-Buddhist (*nava-bauddha*) designates the more recent converts to Buddhism, primarily the followers of Dr. Ambedkar, as distinguished from the small minority of traditional Buddhists.
23. For a collection of papers discussing the is–ought question, see W. D. Hudson (1969).
24. I am grateful to Professor Ashok Aklujkar for guiding me in the search for references in this matter.

7

Person, Self, Identity, and Consciousness

In this last chapter, I wish to bring together some of the distinctive features of traditional Indian and Western views of person, self, and identity. The general thrust of my discussion will be to see how far their perspectives converge or diverge, how far their strengths complement one another, and whether horizons could expand via possible integration of their strong points. To help bring the issues into focus, I intend to discuss a few points again, at the risk of repetition.

Psychology is said to be the study of the experience and behavior of individuals. Regardless of the relative difference in the emphasis on rights versus duties, the idea of persons as individuals with rights and duties has been common to both Indian and Western traditions for centuries. To be held responsible, a person must have the capacity to *know* the rules of conduct in a given context, must be able to *feel* pleasure and pain, and should be able to *choose* among alternative courses of action. This implies the need for the capacities of cognition, affect, and conation. Since the European Enlightenment, this trilogy has provided the basic framework for the development of modern psychology. This view of the mind very closely corresponds with the traditional Indian view of a person as a knower, enjoyer–sufferer, and agent. This close similarity between Indian and Western concepts of personhood provides a solid basis for convergence of perspectives. It is difficult to say whether this similarity is traceable to the common roots of Indo-European languages, and it is for future research to explore the extent of its cross-cultural commonality.

There is great diversity in the ways in which the self has been conceptualized in Indian, as well as in Western, thought. Regardless of such diversity, it makes sense to assume that individuals in any society develop a variety of concepts of who they are, and that such concepts evolve under the joint impact of the bodily changes typical of the human life cycle on the "inside" and the historical changes in the society on the "outside." The need to develop and maintain a sense of unity and sameness in the face of diversity and changes in one's concepts of oneself can

be safely assumed to be common to human beings across cultures. Erikson's view of the sense of identity as an evolving configuration of roles and his analysis of the commonly experienced challenges, tribulations, and ways of coping hold great promise for universal applicability. The issue of how to account for unity and selfsameness in persons is a crucial issue that has received close attention from some of the greatest thinkers of both the Indian and Western traditions. It is in the context of this problem that the distinction between self-as-subject and self-as-object stands out as being not only common to both traditions, but also as a possible basis of convergence of perspectives.

In regard to the concept of identity, it is important to distinguish between two different meanings of this term: First there is the concept of identity as a matter of identification with something or other—with possessions, beliefs, ideology, social roles and relationships, or many other things. The common problem with multiple identifications is the danger of getting split by inner conflicts and outer pulls. Most people are able to maintain a sense of unity and sameness in the face of diversity and change; cases of multiple personality are relatively rare. Although the more cherished identifications provide inner organization and stability through long periods of change, the bonds of identification tend to loosen at times, are open to involuntary and voluntary change, and may even reverse, as in the case of ideological conversions. In principle, the strongest of identifications do not account for numerical identity in persons (i.e., the fact that we experience being *one* and the same person despite being identified with many different things at different times). The second meaning of identity is the principle of selfsameness: that which does not change under any circumstances or at any time. Accounting for the principle of numerical identity has been a difficult problem to which radically different solutions have been suggested in both traditions. The differing solutions are based on different ontological, epistemological, and axiological grounds, particularly on the differing values placed on sameness versus change, Being versus Becoming. These issues need to be looked at once again in the light of major similarities and differences in Indian and Western perspectives.

Two Views

Self, Consciousness, and the Trilogy of Mind

To say that personhood requires the capacity for cognition, affect, and conation is to say that consciousness is the fundamental prerequisite of personhood. Thinking, feeling, and willing have together been supposed to constitute the mind—or at least the core of it—and this, in turn, has usually been equated with consciousness. The Sanskrit term *cit* is a close equivalent of mind or consciousness understood in this sense. Assuming that thinking, feeling, and willing are inextricably interrelated processes, we obtain the notion of a seamless continuum of psychological events. Within the conceptual framework of this trilogy of the mind, we can take each aspect separately and examine whether the self-as-knower, enjoyer–sufferer, or agent can account for the sameness in persons.

A perpetually changing environment—physical as well as social—demands an ongoing process of cognitive reconstruction of the nature of the world and of one's place within it. The ways and means required for the acquisition of knowledge change continually through cognitive accommodation within individuals and through new theories and methods in science. Even if we grant that the continual refinement in ways of knowing and knowledge produced through their means imply progress, perfect knowledge of all aspects of everything to be known is a dream, at least for now, and may remain so possibly forever. Insofar as ways and means of knowing can be said to constitute the self-as-knower, it cannot provide a firm basis for selfsameness in persons.

With appropriate changes, the same kind of considerations apply in regard to the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer. Changes within and around the individual are bound to bring about changes in the enjoyer–sufferer. Freud's notion of the erogenous zones encapsulates some of the common "inner" changes that shift the growing individual's typical ways of enjoying. While the body may acquire or lose painful allergies, we also learn and unlearn new tastes, whether it is a taste for wine or poetry. There are of course external conditions that force what and how much we might enjoy or suffer: cycles of rain and drought, economic cycles, or gain and loss that make a person happy or sad. Changed appraisal of the same object in light of changed values means changes in the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer itself; things that once brought immense joy could later be a bane in the event of renewed understanding to the relevant objects. Changes in the self-as-enjoyer–sufferer are part of the normal course of life; what we love in youth we often want to avoid in later life. Indeed, in some ways, the goal of therapy for a patient, as well as that of "correction" in a convict, is to bring about a radical change in what he or she finds enjoyable or hateful. The same is generally true in spiritual self-development; radical changes in the spiritual aspirant as sufferer–enjoyer are deemed necessary and possible. Turning now to the self-as-agent, we recognize it as having to be equally open to change. Projects once undertaken must be monitored in light of changing circumstances and must occasionally be redirected, abandoned, substituted, or even reversed in the light of changing circumstances. Flexibility is indeed key to meaningful action and successful agency.

While knowing, enjoying, and acting demand continual changes, they also require stability. A fickle agent would be unable to take any project to completion; as Kant's impeccable arguments conclusively demonstrated, the self-as-knower must be assumed to persist over time, since a succession of several different knowers during the process of knowing could not unite a multitude of experiences and ideas and make sense of them together. As well, the concept of justice im-

plies that the agent of good and bad actions must be the same as the enjoyer and sufferer of the respective consequences. Thus, being a person requires both persisting over a period of time and changing appropriately in changing circumstances. This challenge of having to account for both change and sameness applies equally to consciousness, the medium in which cognition, affect, and volition are combined together.

Thinking, feeling, and willing are rightly conceived of as *processes* of consciousness, thus recognizing their changing character. That our thoughts are in a constant state of flux is recognized by thinkers as widely separated in history and geography as Patañjali, Vyāsa, Hume, James, and Sartre. This is hardly surprising, for the flowing character is ostensibly an unmistakable universal feature of human experience in the wakeful state. Humans, like creatures of many other species, go through a circadian cycle of wakefulness and sleep, while most experience occasional dream states as well. While this cyclical nature indicates the changing nature of consciousness, the sense of continued existence across daily cycles of wakefulness and sleep is also an equally common feature of human experience. We do not need William James's insights to remind us that Paul wakes up every morning as Paul, and not as Peter. Except for the rare cases of amnesic fugue and multiple personality, most people have the experience of being one and the same person through daily cycles of wakefulness and sleep week after week, decade after decade. It is not a great achievement on the part of the Upaniṣadic seers to have recognized the cyclical nature of the wakeful, sleep, and dream states. But the discovery of the fourth state of consciousness (which is uncharacterized by intentionality or subject–object split typical of wakeful and dream states) and the conceptualization of the Self as the unchanging witness of the four states of consciousness, deserve to be recognized as great contributions of the Upaniṣadic sages. It is the fourth state that offers, they claim, a direct experience of an undivided, nondual, and unchanging Self, which they called the Ātman–Brahman.

Following the concept of cognition, affect, and conation as the three basic aspects of consciousness, I have tried to explain the systematic methods for the realization of the Self as developed in the traditions of the paths of knowledge (*jñāna*), contemplation (*dhyāna*), devotion (*bhakti*), and nonattached action (*niṣkāma karma*). The basic program proposed by the path of knowledge is relentless critical self-examination with the guiding principle of rejecting anything open to change as the nonself. With the help of deep study of the basic principles of Advaita Vedānta, and after dispelling objections and doubts, one is said to be able to "see through" all ongoing thoughts as but provisional states of knowing, so as to reveal the Self in the experience of the fourth state of consciousness. In the path of contemplation as explained in Patañjali's Yoga aphorisms, the conduct of daily life is disciplined, one cultivates affective neutrality, learns to calm the mind by concentration, and deliberately retards the flow of thoughts until the stream of consciousness comes to a stand still. With this attained, the meditator is said to be able to draw attention away from the objects of consciousness to the center of awareness so as to discover the unchanging nature of the self-as-subject. This strategy is said to help one experience a state of consciousness not much different from the fourth state described in the Upaniṣads and the Advaita Vedānta.

While in Patañjali's Yoga emotions are deliberately subdued and attention is drawn inward until one reaches the center of awareness, the path of devotion recommends the cultivation of intense feelings for a deity of the devotee's choice. In this approach, affect normally invested in the ego is transposed onto an all-pervasive God so that the devotee's sense of individuality is said to get dissolved like a doll made of salt immersed in water. Notwithstanding this interesting contrast between the paths of Yoga and devotion, they reach destinations that are quite alike; both help counter egoism. Also, while the Advaita Vedāntist seems to discover bliss at the center of subjective experience that quickly fills the entire space, the devotee is said to find love invested in the deity to manifest itself everywhere. The experience of the endless love of the "divine" is often as highly valued as that of the experience of the altered states of consciousness called *samādhi* in Advaita Vedānta and Yoga. The development of a variety of methods for the attainment of the altered states of consciousness and the attendant self-transformation is clearly a specialty of the many distinct spiritual traditions of the East in general and of India in particular. The various schools of Indian philosophy have developed alternative conceptual frameworks with sophisticated theories of reality, knowledge, and values.

Notwithstanding the irreconcilable doctrinal differences among these schools of philosophy and in their prescriptions for spiritual development, in some ways they are very similar. First, despite their relative emphasis on one or another aspect of the trilogy of mind, many, although not all, schools recognize a state of consciousness beyond cognition, affect, and conation. Second, although most schools are individualistic in the sense of emphasizing self-transformation through individual effort rather than reaching utopian goals through collective action, they nevertheless promise and cherish transpersonal goals such as compassion for all creatures rather than the pursuit of self-aggrandizement. Third, most of these schools point to the principle of unity in diversity and of sameness in change that is attained not through reason, but through some nonrational means, such as contemplation or devotion. This is true even of the Advaita Vedānta school, which suggests the use of critical thinking and dialectical reasoning to reach out to something beyond reason. Indeed, emphasis on something beyond reason is a common feature that sets many Eastern approaches to the study of persons apart and distinguishes them from most Western approaches. In the next section of this chapter, I will try to present Plato's view of reality and compare and contrast it with that of the Advaita Vedānta in an attempt to point out some deep similar-

ities, differences, and complementarities between prominent Indian and Western worldviews. The focus here will be on views of knowledge in general and self-knowledge in particular.

Levels of Reality in Plato and in Advaita Vedānta

Figure 7.1 represents Plato's well-known view of the four stages of cognition and the corresponding levels of reality. The aspects of this approach most relevant to the present topic are as follows: First, Plato provides a perspective on levels of

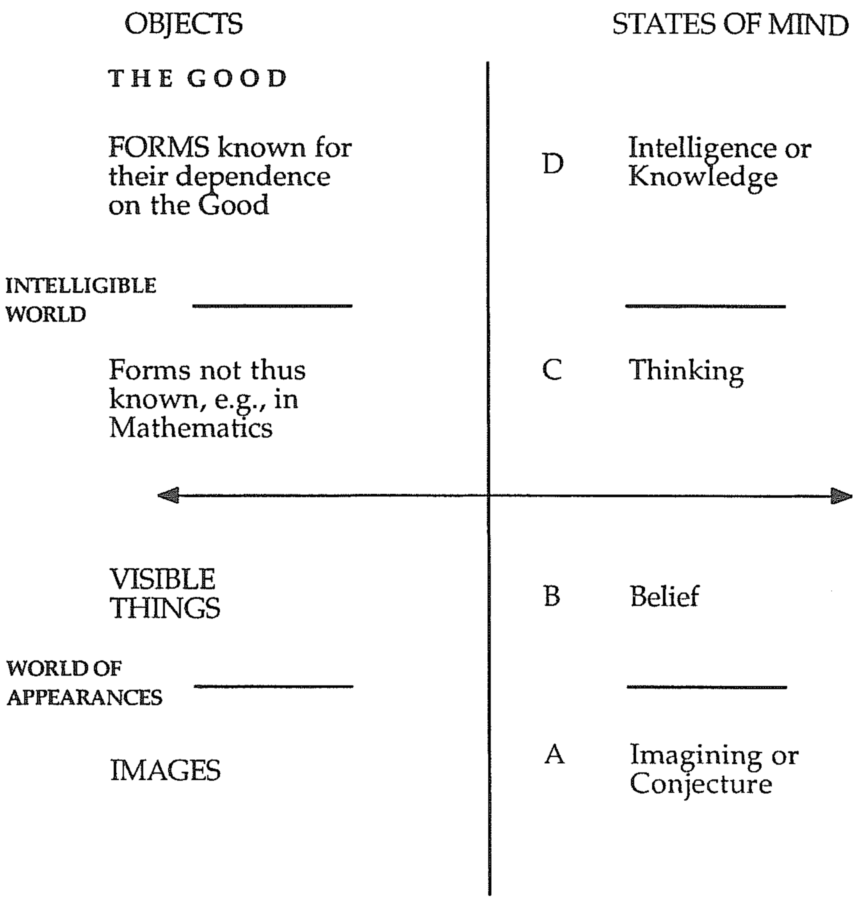

Figure 7.1. Plato's line dividing the world of visible objects from that of intelligible forms. Adapted from Plato (1941, p. 217).

reality and suggests ways of knowing them by means of various processes of consciousness. Elsewhere in the *Republic* (1941, p. 249), Plato assigns the lower levels of reality to the zone of Becoming, while placing the world of Forms in the higher levels to the sphere of Being. For Plato, the Forms were essences of things, which account for the unity underlying the multiplicity of similar phenomena: the essential "catness" of all the varieties of cats, the triangularity of all triangular objects and figures, and the Beauty of all beautiful things, and ultimately the Good in the entire universe. Plato conceived of a hierarchy of increasingly abstract, general, and universal Forms, which he viewed as imperishable and "real," i.e., belonging to a mind-independent reality. The multiple of objects accessible to the imagination and the senses were placed in the impermanent and less real world of Becoming and all the intelligible Forms in the category of Being. The implication of this view to the problem of identity should be clear. It is through thinking or reason that one reaches out to the unity in multiplicity, universal behind the particular (the Jamesian Self of selves), and thus to the principle of sameness underlying the interminable changes in the person.

Plato's concept of Forms and his concept of the "real" are highly complex and have generated much discussion throughout the history of Western thought, beginning with Aristotle's disagreement with Plato's sharp division between the Forms and the objects, between the abstract ideals and the concrete particulars. But the issue that I wish to raise is not the theory of Forms per se, nor the highly controversial issue of the nature of universals.[1] It is that Plato initiated the notion that it is through *reason* that we can discover the principle of unity in diversity and of sameness in change. It is my observation that, in the Western tradition, by and large, this Platonic strategy has been the most dominant strategy in dealing with the problem of identity for millennia. Let us take a look at the strategies of some of the staunchest defenders of the concept of an enduring self in the intellectual history of Europe.

During the medieval and Renaissance periods, when St. Augustine and Descartes affirmed the existence of a putative soul that continues throughout life and beyond, they basically pointed out the absurdity of denying the existence of the one who might be deceived, or of the one who thinks. During the Age of Enlightenment, when Hume questioned the sameness of the self since it was not given in experience, Butler and Kant defended the principle of selfsameness on *rational* grounds. Thus, while Butler argued that selfsameness of the one who remembers the past must be presumed in the concept of memory, Kant argued that unless we grant the continued existence of self-as-knower, we deny the very possibility of knowledge, which is absurd. In the 20th century, Wittgenstein echoed Butler's position in suggesting that the language games we use in speaking of the person or the self are based on the presumption of the continued existence of entities we represent by those terms. In all these instances, the primary basis for affirming the continued existence of the self is the use of reason or thinking, which

is the classical Platonic strategy. Kant also follows Plato's footsteps in distinguishing between higher and lower levels of reality, the noumenal and the phenomenal, but recognizes the limitations of reason in directly accessing noumenal entities such as the Pure Ego. This is like Plato's metaphor of the Sun, the Truth incarnate, which he thought was so bright as to blind those who dared to use reason and peep out of the dark caves of their mundane existence.

Returning now to the Platonic scheme represented in Fig. 7.1, we may note that it suggests connections between different levels of reality and its knowledge by means of specific "states of mind." Although this scheme has been affirmed, elaborated, modified, and criticized in many different ways over the centuries, it has nevertheless provided a basic framework for understanding the role of the states or processes of consciousness in attaining knowledge in general, and self-knowledge in particular. In Plato's scheme, various "states of mind" are means leading to "lower" as well as "higher" forms of knowledge. Granting that translations from Greek to English and from philosophical language into the idiom of contemporary psychology are problematic, let me attempt to explain what is involved in Plato's concept of the "states of mind." In my view, they involve a variety of sensory and cognitive processes. First, what Plato calls "Belief" (quadrant B in Fig. 7.1) involves seeing, hearing, and other sensory processes on the basis of which we believe in the existence of objects in the physical world. Next, "conjecture" (quadrant A) can be understood to mean cognitive construction involved in setting up hypotheses; "thinking" (C) involves deductive reasoning as used in mathematics; and Plato's reference to engaging in dialogues in attaining "knowledge" (D) suggests cognitive processes involved in oppositional (or "dialectical") thinking necessary for discriminating between permanent versus impermanent, good versus bad. Together, I would submit, Plato's view suggests a variety of sensory and cognitive processes as means to knowledge at any and all levels.

This is not much different from the idea of "experience" and "reason" as two sources of knowledge, an idea that has persisted in the West for the past several centuries. These two sources imply sensory and cognitive processes, which is the traditional domain of psychological studies. It is further implied that the wakeful state of consciousness in which these processes occur provides the only window on the world available to us. The use of the interpretation of dreams in psychoanalytical studies of repressed desires and conflicts is a rare exception to this implicit but common assumption. There is little use in the Western tradition for other states of consciousness. Plotinus, who spoke of the One as the single ultimate principle of the universe almost the same way as the Upaniṣads spoke of Brahman, apprehended it in some altered state of consciousness as indicated by his disciple's account of his extraordinary experiences. Although the contemplative tradition of neo-Platonism still survives in Europe, it is marginalized and has little if any impact on the mainstream of Western thought. The psychologists William James

and Abraham Maslow recognized the "noetic" or illuminating as well as redeeming qualities of extraordinary states of consciousness. However, by and large, response to such claims in contemporary psychology is often hostile and weak at its best.

This is precisely where the Indian tradition is radically different. In Yoga and Vedānta, as well as in most schools of Buddhist thought in India and elsewhere in Asia, the attainment of higher states of consciousness is a matter of great importance, and evidence obtained in such states is considered crucial. In Zen Buddhism, for instance, the nature and significance of the experience of *satori* is similar to that of *samādhi* in Yoga. In several systems of Asian thought, the experience of such states is particularly critical in understanding the nature of self and self-transformation regardless of their differing positions on many issues. In the balance of this chapter, I wish to summarize some of the key features of the Advaita Vedāntic views of person, self, and identity with an emphasis on the validation and valuation of the experience of the Self that is said to occur in the fourth state of consciousness. In this context, the Advaita Vedāntic view may be schematically presented in Fig. 7.2.

The larger ellipse in Fig. 7.2 schematically represents the Advaita Vedāntic

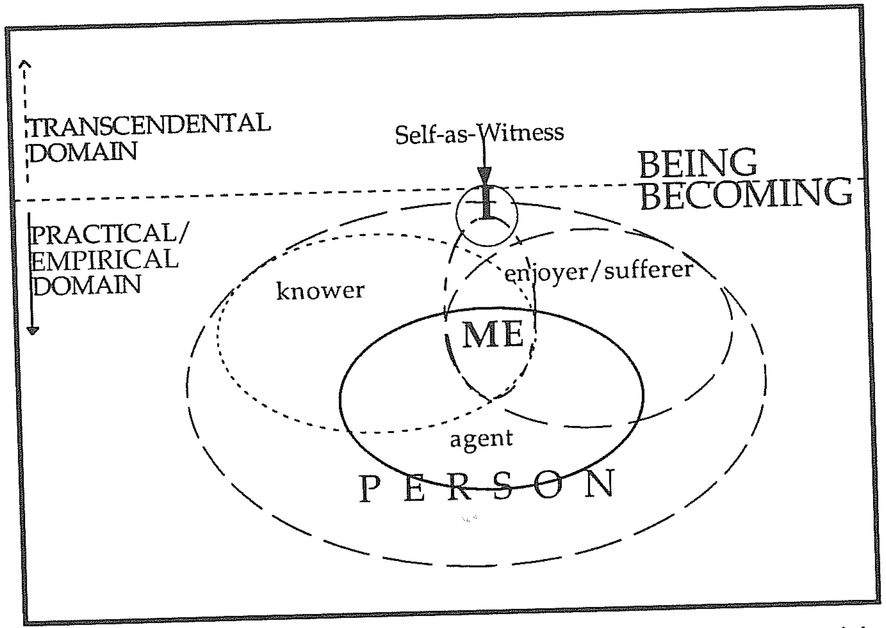

FIGURE 7.2. A schematic diagram representing the Advaita Vedāntic view of the person and the levels of reality.

view of the person as a knower, enjoyer–sufferer, and agent. The dotted line of the larger ellipse suggests the open and flexible "boundaries" of a person's individuality, and the three overlapping medium-sized ellipses within indicate the mutually intertwined psychological processes of cognition, emotion, and volition. The smaller inner ellipse represents the "ego" with its sense of Me and Mine (*ahaṁkāra*) and the attendant sense of ownership of one's beliefs, emotions, and actions. The dotted horizontal straight line suggests the conceptual separation between the transcendental (*parā*) and practical (*vyāvahārika*, *aparā*) levels of reality (*sattā*). The person obviously belongs to the practical/empirical domain knowable through sensory experience and reason. In this schematic representation, the "I" could be viewed as being "located" at a person's center of experience, grounded in the transcendental domain of Being on the "inner" side and accessing countless intentional objects in the world of Becoming on the "outer." As long as the person remains attached to various intentional objects by way of knowing, feeling, and acting, the "I" understands the world through the filters of the cognitive system available at that time. In this mode, the "I" identifies itself with an evolving configuration of a multitude of Jamesian selves. If and when one loosens the ties of identification with various intentional objects and sees through the set of filters by means of listening, contemplation, and other such methods of "meditation," one no longer remains stuck with the multiple selves and their changing fortunes. The cultivation of a sense of detachment (*vairāgya*) allows a person to experience him- or herself as an uninvolved witness unaffected by the trials and tribulations of daily life, like the proverbial lotus leaf untouched by the surrounding water and muck. When one becomes firmly anchored in the witnessing mode, attention can be withdrawn completely from the plethora of intentional objects, the intentional stance (*bahiḥ prajña*) can be dispensed with, and the subject–object distinction typical of the wakeful and dream states of consciousness drops off. At that point, one experiences an altered state of consciousness (*nirvikalpa samādhi*) devoid of the subject–object split. In this experience, the Self experiences itself as simply existing or Being; that one always *is*.

This schematic outline of the Advaita Vedāntic approach indicates some similarities with the Platonic approach shown in Fig. 7.1. The two are alike in delineating lower and higher levels of reality; both place Being at a higher level of reality and value it over Becoming, and both suggest ways of reaching out to the higher level of reality by the use of dialogical thinking. However, the main difference between the two approaches is that in the Advaita Vedānta, the attainment of "wisdom" through the study of texts and their dialogical arguments is not considered to be adequate. A follower of the Advaitic approach is expected to be able to attain self-realization via the experience of the fourth state of consciousness. The Kantian worldview also suggests a distinction between lower (phenomenal) and higher (transcendental) levels of reality somewhat similar to the Advaita Vedāntic approach. However, Kant merely points at the Pure Ego at the noumenal

level by means of astute arguments and denies direct access to it. As William James noted in his critique of the Kantian position, the Pure Ego is merely a matter of postulation; it could neither be verified nor found to be useful in any way. By contrast, the Advaita Vedānta approach not only claims the possibility of directly experiencing the Self, but also explains how such claims can be verified and what beneficial consequences follow from such experience.

The Validation and Valuation of the Experience of the Self

The issues of validation and valuation belong to the fields of knowledge and values, which brings us back to epistemology and axiology. Issues of epistemology are often intricately connected with ontological presuppositions. In an earlier publication (Paranjpe, 1984), I have discussed in detail approaches to consciousness of major schools of Western psychology and Indian thought.[2] Since I have compared in that context the ontological presuppositions, investigative strategies, epistemological doctrines, and values that shape their approaches to consciousness, I shall not repeat the discussion here. I shall only briefly go over some of the epistemological and axiological considerations that are connected directly with the validation and valuation of the experience of Self. I shall avoid discussion of differing ontological doctrines, since at least in Indian though views on validation of knowledge of higher states of consciousness closely parallel each other even among schools that uphold radically different and irreconcilable ontological doctrines. For instance, as we shall soon see, Advaita Vedānta and Yoga adopt closely compatible views on the validation of the highest state of *samādhi*, although the strictly nondualist ontology of the former could never be reconciled with the latter's strongly dualist position. Moreover, as we saw earlier, rival schools of Advaita Vedānta also radically differ on the issue of realism versus idealism, and yet their approaches depend heavily on the evidence of the *samādhi* state. Let me therefore set aside ontological matters and turn to epistemological issues of verifiability and falsifiability.

Let us first consider Patañjali's Yoga system, which squarely addresses the issue of verifiability. In his commentary on Patañjali's aphorisms, Vyāsa (3.6) clarifies that Yoga can be known only by *doing* Yoga.[3] What this means is that *samādhi* states can be directly experienced by any interested persons if they follow the procedures that are clearly spelled out (Paranjpe, 1984, pp. 207–210). In other words, any doubts regarding Yogic claims about the nature of *samādhi* states can be tested if one is ready to follow a specific set of procedures. The Yogic claim relevant to the identity issue is that, when the stream of consciousness (*citta nadī*) is brought to a standstill by means of concentrative meditation, the Self stays in its own (unchanging) state, thereby directly experiencing that which accounts for selfsameness within us. This Yogic approach to validation of its claims by repeating a set procedure has an uncanny concordance with the concepts of testability

and confirmability of propositions and of replicability of results, which have been extensively discussed in the history of the philosophy of science. For a proposition to be testable, its concepts and principles must be clearly stated, the conditions under which the putative results are obtainable must be specified, and the procedures leading to those conditions must be clearly laid out and in principle be repeatable. The principles of Yoga are clearly stated in texts that are widely available around the world, the preparations and procedures leading to the *samādhi* states have been clearly spelled out, and they can be followed by anyone who is interested and has acquired the stated prerequisites. Adequate preparation, including training in the discipline as well as acquisition of appropriate skills, is of course a necessary part in the discovery and validation of knowledge in any field.

Like the Yogis, the Advaita Vedāntists, too, rely on the experience of the *samādhi* state in support of their claim that the self-as-subject, or Ātman, accounts for the principle of selfsameness in persons. However, in contrast to the Yogis, the Advaita Vedāntists rely more on the principle of falsifiability than verifiability. As noted in Chapter 3, Advaita Vedāntists view knowledge as cognition that is not-yet-falsified, highlighting the provisional nature of all empirical knowledge, which is said to be always open to falsification. Indeed, the Advaita Vedāntist emphasis on unfalsified cognition strikes a deep chord with Popper's views of falsification, and the nature and limits of the similarity between the two merits serious discussion. However, space does not permit a detailed discussion here of this issue in the light of the varieties of falsificationism suggested in contemporary philosophy of science (e.g., Lakatos, 1970). While recognizing the deep similarity between the Popperian spirit of open conjectures and rigorous refutation on the one hand and the Advaita Vedāntist invitation to test every belief against all possible doubts and antitheses on the other, some obvious differences between them may be noted. First, the primary context of Popperian falsification is the natural and social sciences, and much of the recent debate is concerned with ensuring the progress of science. By contrast, the primary context of Yoga and Vedānta is self-knowledge, and its basic concern is personal edification. Second, while in contemporary natural and social sciences there is an unwritten demand for publicly accessible data, the experiences on which propositions concerning the nature of the self are based are not publicly accessible.

Empirical verification of any sort has to ultimately depend on the *experience* of the person who desires it, and nobody's experience is *directly* accessible to anybody else. Scientists circumvent the problem of privacy by restricting their subject matter to objects and events that are equally open for anybody to see, touch, or smell, such as a red precipitate in a test tube, or the position of a needle on a properly connected electrical meter. Such restriction poses no problems for the natural sciences since their chosen subject matter excludes such things as selfhood and consciousness. To exclude such things from psychology is to throw away the baby with the bath water as the behaviorists did. Psychologists who dare to concern

themselves with issues such as pain, which are in the domain of consciousness inaccessible to public scrutiny, must deal with epistemological problems of experiential verification. In regard to such private states as pain, as noted before, in my view the philosopher Kurt Baier (1962) was right in granting the person whose private state it is the final epistemological authority. For, to put it in commonsense terms, only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches and whether or not it is painful. Such authority of course presumes that the person claiming to say that "I have a shooting pain in my groin" understands what is talked about and shares consensual meanings of such descriptors with interlocutors in an atmosphere of mutuality and trust. Neither a child who has yet to learn to discriminate between a headache and a heartburn nor a malingering worker trying to obtain worker's compensation may be granted epistemic authority over their statements of pain. Assuming that a trustworthy adult is speaking of pain in a "phantom limb" (in an amputated arm that no longer exists, for instance), the report of pain is not falsifiable. As noted by Hebb (1960) and other psychologists, one can experience a real pain in a phantom limb. In the Indian tradition, accounts of experiences of states such as *samādhi* have been accepted as reliable testimony from highly trustworthy persons whose motives are beyond reproach and whose words are more acceptable than those of honest patients complaining of pain in a phantom limb.

The Advaita Vedāntic accounts of the nature of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, like the Yogic descriptions of the nature of the *asaṁprajñāta samādhi*, are not falsifiable in two different ways. First, both states are said to belong to the "no-thought zone" of consciousness in that the former lacks the intentional mode needed for and implicit in speech and in the latter mind is said to be stilled and emptied of thoughts. As such, these states are beyond verbal description, and as such are sometimes considered "mystical" states. It makes sense that William James considered such states "ineffable," echoing the Upaniṣadic expression "*neti, neti*" or "not so, not so." In such states the Self, or the experiencing self-as-subject, simply *is*; describing it in statements such as "I am so and so, or in such a state" is impossible and meaningless. And obviously if something cannot be stated in a prepositional form, it cannot be refuted. Second, such *samādhi* states are beyond the range of falsification in the sense that they can be experienced only after cognitive processes such as observation and argumentation, which are necessarily involved in trying to falsify anything, have come to a stop. Insofar as the Popperian criterion of science insists on having to deal with theories that are in principle falsifiable, the states of *samādhi* are beyond the scope of Popperian science.

Indeed, self-knowledge in this Upaniṣadic sense is an oxymoron, since the distinction between the knower and the known implicit in the common concept of knowing is said to be absent in the fourth state of consciousness. For someone experiencing the fourth state, there is no longer any need for, or relevance of, either

a speaker trying to convince someone or a listener who either might support or refute the speaker's statements. The absence of speaker and listener is meant not only in the sense of two separate embodied humans, but also in the sense of two inner voices addressing each other in silent conversation, like a Meadian self or "I" speaking to a "generalized other." It is important to note in this regard that in the Indian tradition, a distinction is made between two fundamentally different types of "knowledge": *vṛtti jñāna*, meaning knowledge that is embedded in the cognitive states, and *svarūpa jñāna*, which implies knowledge of the Self that lies beyond the cognitive states.[4] This latter concept of knowledge may not be absent from the Western tradition, but it certainly is not common in contemporary psychology or philosophy of science.

As noted in Chapter 1, in contemporary discourse in the philosophy of science, following Sellars (1963), a distinction is sometimes made between "knowing *that*" and "knowing *how*." Knowing that something is so, such as "I own this house," may be either true or false and is open to falsification. But in several matters of knowing how, such as knowing how to swim, putting the knowledge to use is more important than deciding its truth or falsity. In other words, utility is an important criterion for judging knowledge claims. A solution to a problem that brings results is a good solution; I have heard a psychologist expressing it in terms of "engineering validity." William James was disappointed with Kant's notion of the transcendental Ego, not simply because he found it unverifiable, but mainly because he thought its postulation was useless. He called it a "nothing ... an ineffectual and windy ... abortion" (James, 1890/1983, p. 345). The emphasis on effectiveness implicit in this remark is suggestive of James's pragmatism. Turning now to the Indian side, we may note that the notion of transcendental Self in Yoga and Advaita Vedānta is not only verifiable as noted above, it is also effective; effective, that is, in bringing about a major transformation in the individual who discovers it. What is the nature of such a transformation, and why should a discovery of the principle of selfsameness lead to it?

To repeat the answer suggested before, the discovery of the Self in the *samādhi* state is expected to result in the experience of inner peace and tranquillity by the person after returning to ordinary states of consciousness. This is because, having realized that the "I" is the indescribable Ātman–Brahman, which implies everything that ever was, is, and will be, one is no longer lured by commonly coveted possible selves nor afraid of becoming some fearful possible self in the future. Such overcoming of covetousness and fear dispenses with a fragile and vainglorious ego, which in turn manifests in unselfish and compassionate behavior. This should explain why the Indian tradition as reflected in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* portrays self-realized persons as saintly in their behavior. Such behavior is an observable aftereffect of the experience of the Self. Indeed, self-proclaimed claims to self-realization are routinely shunned in the Indian cultural tradition and saintly manifestations of boundless compassion are often viewed as proof of self-realization.

Being unselfish and having genuine compassion for all humans are characteristics valued everywhere. There is nothing strange if a self-realized Advaita Vedāntist is as much interested in human welfare as a Baconian scientist is dedicated to the "improvement of the estate of man [*sic*]." What is ironic is that while in Buddhism the discovery of no-self is said to lead to unlimited compassion (*karuṇā*), in Advaita Vedānta the same is said to follow from the conviction that there is nothing more real than the Self. As noted in Chapter 2, the apparent contradiction in the Advaitic and Buddhist positions arises partly from differences in what they mean by the self which they affirm or deny. As we shall presently see, the differences could partly be understood in terms of the differences in their relative valuation of sameness versus change, Being versus Becoming.

The Relative Valuation of Being and Becoming

Since the time of Buddha and Heraclitus there are some who value Becoming over Being, and there are others like the Upaniṣadic seers and Parmenides who place Being at a level higher than Becoming. Such relative preferences continue generation after generation, as they did with Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hume. To some extent, the differences in perspective are similar to saying that a cup is half empty or half full; while both accounts are correct, some prefer to look at one half more than the other. There are of course still others who see the glass both full and empty at the same time. Thus, in psychology, there are several perspectives that recognize the changing as well as the relatively fixed or stable aspects of behavior, although there might be relative emphasis on either side. The behaviorist approach, for instance, seemed to generally favor change over stability in that the processes of learning and plasticity of behavior were emphasized and concepts such as traits suggesting stable or invariant patterns were often denied or disputed. At the same time, the overall thrust of the behaviorist approach was to discover universal laws that govern behavior at all times, assuming an eternal and invariant structure of the universe. Turning to the psychoanalytic approach, we note that Freud's model showed how patterns of libidinal gratification undergo systematic changes from one stage of psychosexual development to the next. Yet, Freud insisted that every child has a distinctive way of resolving the Oedipal conflict, which shapes his character in a way that is difficult to change despite years of analysis. Then again Piaget's cognitive approach emphasized the constant interplay of assimilation and accommodation, of the coexisting forces of stability and change. Yet, as noted, Piaget explicitly favored Becoming over Being. Further, in the Eriksonian model, although the focus is on identity, which is essentially a principle of selfsameness, an individual's sense of identity is said to be forever revisable, thus implicitly emphasizing Becoming over Being.

Turning now to Indian thought, we may note that the Advaita Vedāntists recognize the constantly changing phenomenal reality (*māyā*), although they devalue this aspect by assigning it to a lower level of reality and insist that the unchanging

Brahman is the single immanent and transcendent principle underlying all changes in the universe. The Yoga system, however, follows the Sāṅkhya system in assigning equal weight to Being and Becoming reflected in a thoroughly dualistic ontology. By comparison, the Buddha chose not to get involved with "metaphysical" issues of dualism and nondualism. Instead, he focused on Becoming in recognition of the need for improvement common to most men and women. By comparison, the Advaita Vedāntists adopted a different strategy: of appealing to people to realize that thinking as if impermanent things like youth and wealth are permanent contributed more to suffering than happiness, and urging them to search for that in themselves which remains unchanged forever. It is important to look at both Being and Becoming in one way or another, for like the empty and filled parts, and like yin and yang, East and West, both taken together account for the whole.

On Bridging the Gulf: Between Being and Becoming, East and West

Being and Becoming are dialectical twins; each does not mean anything without an implicit reference to its counterpart. There is an interesting tale about Pārvati, the goddess said to symbolize the perpetually evolving phenomenal world. She is said to have once reminded her consort Lord Shiva, the symbol of Eternity who survives periodic destruction of creation, that His most hallowed selfsameness has no meaning without reference to her own continually changing character. We may say, *mutais mutandis*, that selfsame "I" has little meaning without reference to the continually changing "Me;" the two coexist side by side, as it were, within one and the same person. The *Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad (3.1–3) presents this idea in a beautiful metaphor:

> Two birds, fast bound companions,
> Clasp close the self-same tree.
> Of these two, the one eats sweet fruit;
> The other looks on without eating. (1)
> On the self-same tree a person, sunken,
> Grieves for his impotence, deluded;
> When he sees the other, the Lord (īś), contented,
> And his greatness, he becomes freed from sorrow. (2)
> When a seer sees the brilliant
> Maker, Lord, Person, the Brahman-source,
> Then, being a knower, shaking off good and evil,
> Stainless, he attains supreme identity (sāmya) [with Him]. (3)
> (*Muṇḍaka* Upaniṣad, 3.1–2; R. E. Hume's translation, 1931, p. 374)

Traditional commentaries such as the one by Śaṅkara (1964) explain that in this poem the tree symbolizes the embodied person; the bird that eats fruit is the Me, the enjoyer–sufferer attached to various objects in the world; and its twin is the "knower of the field" (*kṣetrajña*), or the "I" as an uninvolved Self-as-Witness. The main message of the metaphor is that the true Self is the witness with a

capacity to look over everything in life without grieving for the losses nor celebrating the victories as its twin, the Me, does. In other words, if one adopts the stance of an uninvolved witness, then one stays "above" the waves that rock the ego and toss it up and down on an emotional roller coaster. Lasting bliss and relief from suffering is said to be attained by remaining anchored in the stance of an uninvolved witness.

For those committed to winning the battles in the game of one-upmanship or to the ideal of perpetual progress toward better or bigger of something or other, the bird that simply looks over is a useless model. Such a model would be either complacent, impotent, or indicative of a "sour grapes" attitude. Being a passive witness might be rated as worse than a powerless "speaker" of a House to whom everyone in the House defers by way of formality but has no clout. Ironically, in the above quote, the Upaniṣad views the uninvolved bird as the Lord, keeping the high position of *contentment*, not of complacency. Many of us today would rather be a president of the republic with "real" power over the army and the cabinet than a figurehead royal dispassionately witnessing the rise and fall of powerful politicians. In modern times, the hero is more popular than the saint. Even if one is not driven by a desire for power, as long as we are involved with the affairs of daily life, we cannot afford to stagnate; we must keep changing as per demands of the perpetually changing world in which we live. And insofar as change is inevitable, it makes sense to try change for the better and avoid being pulled down. On this matter Buddha and Aristotle are alike; while the former urges us to improve ethically, the latter advocates self-actualization.

Self-actualization is model of self-transformation favored widely in the Western tradition from Aristotle to Maslow. As I have noted elsewhere (Paranjpe, 1984), the idea of self-actualization has usually implied the actualization of *potentials*. The idea here is that human beings have hidden strengths that manifest themselves in accomplishments in some form or other. It is implicitly in this sense that the human potential movement in American psychology in the past few decades tried to develop methods for enhancing the self-actualization of persons. Such a concept of self-development is consistent with the notion of perpetual progress, which is a dominant theme of the Western tradition. In principle there is no end to how much we can accomplish in quantity or quality, whether in terms of the measurable amount of wealth or speed or in terms of the intangible quality of an artistic creation. This model clearly favors Becoming over Being. An alternative model is that of the discovery of one's Being, of the realization of the Self that one was, is, and would remain forever. In this model, the self is not a trove of hidden potentials to be coaxed into some or other form of gain. It is, rather, a matter of *realization*, i.e., of unveiling of the selfsame principle of the "I" that mistakenly appears as the Me in varied incarnations.

But then, why should the discovery of Being be more valuable than constantly trying to be better and better in something or other? To repeat, there are two

considerations that justify such an evaluation. First, the race for bigger and better never ends; expectations always exceed levels of success, thereby contributing to net dissatisfaction. Second, in old age as we run out of time to improve, we are likely to be haunted by the thought that we never found the true self; that we lived a wrong life in the service of a pseudoself, and there will be no time to change the situation. If one discovers the immutable Self—that which one always was, is, and will remain—then one need not keep searching for the best that one would wish to be nor mourn for not having become what one could/should have become. Such a discovery would not only mitigate any feelings of existential despair, but also lead to an undisturbed calm. According to Śaṅkara (1980, 1.1.1), the realization of an immutable Self occurs upon the removal of the common *errors* of attributing to the unchanging self-as-subject the continually changing features of the self-as-object on the one hand and of presuming unity and permanence of the many changing selves on the other. For removing these errors, one does not need to go anywhere or do anything, as is implicit in trying to attain self-actualization. The kingdom of heaven, it is said, is within each of us.

The 17th-century saint–poet Tukārām put it into simple terms that may be paraphrased as follows: Your Self is with you; but you are not finding it since you are looking for it in the wrong place. This reminds us of the Sufi parable of someone looking for his lost keys under the light not because they were lost there, but because one could see there. We need not laugh at this misguided keyseeker; there are volumes after volumes of empirical and rational investigations of the self that miss the point that looking for the Self where it *IS* is deceptively simple. The See-er is not an object to be looked at; if it were, Hume would have found it in his introspective investigation. But then Kant assigned the Pure Ego to the forever experientially inaccessible world of the noumenal reality. Although so close as to Be itself, the See-er remains so elusive as to need years of research. For Plato, as for many who followed him over the centuries, the gulf between the one and the many, reality and appearance, seemed too wide to bridge. Interestingly, the *Muṇḍaka* (2.2.5), as well as *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads conceived of the metaphor of a bridge that connects Being or "immortality" on the one hand with Becoming or "mortality" on the other:

> Now the Soul (Ātman) is the bridge [or dam], the separation for keeping these worlds apart. Over that bridge [or dam] there cross neither day, nor night, nor old age, nor death, nor sorrow, nor well-doing, nor evil-doing. All evils turn back therefrom, for that Brahma-world is freed from evil. (1)
>
> Therefore, verily, upon crossing that bridge, if one is blind, he becomes no longer blind; if he is sick, he becomes no longer sick. Therefore, verily, upon crossing that bridge, the night appears even as the day, for that Brahma-world is ever illuminated. (2)
> (*Chāndogya* Upaniṣad, 8.4.1-2; Hume's translation, pp. 265–266)

The bridge to be crossed is after all *within* us; on the one side is the Being that affords the experience of the unmistakable sameness of the "I," while on the other

side is the "Me" that does not cease to clothe itself in ever-new garb. It would appear that the self-realization model has been generally favored by the likes of Advaita Vedāntists in the East, to the relative neglect of self-actualization. It would also appear that the likes of Aristotle and Erikson in the West have emphasized self-actualization of the ever-evolving Me to the relative neglect of the transcendental center of awareness. However, East and West are at the two sides of everyone at all times. Being on that bridge is simply to realize that East and West are as inevitable a pair as Being and Becoming, the "I" and the "Me."

Notes

1. For a concise account of the long debates in Europe over the "problem of universals," see W. T. Jones (1969, Vol. 2, pp. 185–196).
2. In *Theoretical Psychology: The Meeting of East and West* (Paranjpe, 1984, Ch. 2 and 3), I have discussed the following perspectives on consciousness: William James's, structuralist, behaviorist, psychoanalytical, psychophysiological, phenomenological, Yogic, and Advaita Vedāntic.
3. Vyāsa's words in this connection are:

   yogo yogena jñātavyo yogo yogat pravartate | (Vyāsa, 3.6).

4. I wish to thank Dr. Nalinee Chapekar for pointing out this distinction.

Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

abādhita Not (yet) contradicted or falsified. According to the Advaita Vedānta, a cognition that has not yet been falsified is taken to be truthful.

adhyāsa An Advaita Vedāntic term meaning superimposition, or misattribution, of the properties of the single, unchanging Self onto the many changing selves, and vice versa.

adhyātma; *adhyātmavidyā* Literally, *adhyātma* means pertaining to the self, and generally it relates to things pertaining to the spiritual well being of persons. *Adhyātmavidyā* is the "science of the self."

āgama Authority of the scriptures. In Advaita Vedānta, scriptural statements on matters such the Self or ultimate reality are accepted as truths in a manner that testimony of trustworthy persons is considered valid.

ānanda Bliss.

antaḥkaraṇa "Inner instrument," conceived of in Advaita Vedānta as including the mind and the intellect.

anubhava A broad term meaning experience in general, including perceptual, as well as transcendental, experience.

anubhāva Overt expressions accompanying the experience of emotions.

anumāna Inference.

anupalabdhi Knowledge based on the *lack* of empirical data about something, such as knowing that my pen is not now on the table.

aparā vidyā Lower level of knowledge as conceived in the Advaita Vedānta, which implies knowledge of the phenomenal world through sensory experience and reason, as opposed to higher level of knowledge attained in altered states of consciousness such as the fourth state.

apavarga Emancipation of the soul from continued transmigration.

artha (1) Wealth, often considered in the Indian tradition as one of the four major goals worth attaining in life along three others: *dharma*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. (2) Object of experience.

arthāpatti Postulation, assumption, or supposition as a means to knowledge.

āsana Bodily postures, especially as recommended in Yoga as one of the aids to concentration.
ātman The Self.
ātmavidyā Knowledge or "science" of the Self.
avidyā Generally, ignorance, or nescience. In Advaita Vedānta, the term *avidyā* is used in contrast with knowledge of the absolute—Brahman—attained in higher states of consciousness. In recognition of the inherent limits of all empirical knowledge and rational understanding, the term *avidyā* is often presumed to include "scientific" knowledge.
bhakti Devotion, primarily understood as devotion to God or a deity.
bhāva Emotion.
bhoktā One who enjoys and/or suffers.
Brahmā God as Creator; one of the three divine principles conceived in Hinduism along with Viṣṇu, the Protector, and Maheśa or Śiva, the Destroyer.
Brahman Absolute single principle of reality as conceived in the Upaniṣads and in the Advaita Vedānta.
buddhi Intellect.
cit Consciousness.
citta Mind, especially as conceived of in Yoga as having the capacity to attend and to serve as a storehouse of impressions left behind by past experiences.
dharma A term with complex and varied meanings, including duties appropriate for one's station in life, social ethos that regulates individual behavior and society as a whole, natural properties of things, and so on. Doing one's duties is considered one of the four major goals in life, along with *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*.
dhāraṇā A Yogic term meaning anchoring the stream of thoughts to a particular object of thought.
dhyāna Contemplation, specifically defined in Yogic terminology as a steady and homogenous flow of thoughts.
guṇa Generally, property or characteristic of a thing, but in Sāṅkhya philosophy *guṇa* implies one of the three (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*) "strands" or interacting components of Prakṛti, the primordial materiality of the universe.
indriya Sense organ.
Īśvara God, conceived differently in different schools of thought. In Patañjali's Yoga, for instance, Īśvara is a special soul or spirit untouched by traces of afflicted actions.
jīva Literally, a living being; but in Advaita Vedānta, it designates a human being with capacity to know, feel, and to engage in intentional action, thus meaning a person.
jñāna Knowledge.
jñāna mārga, or *jñāna yoga* Method of self-realization or spiritual self-development by means of attaining knowledge of the Self through critical self-examination.

jñātā The person or self with the capacity to know or understand.
kaivalya Literally, isolation. In the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems, the term *kaivalya* implies the state of release from the unending chain of action and its consequences through the isolation or detachment of the Self (*Puruṣa*) from Prakṛti.
kalpita Imagined or constructed.
kāma Literally, desire. Often, the term is used to indicate the fulfillment of desires as one of the four major goals of life, along with *dharma*, *artha*, and *mokṣa*.
karma Literally, action; most commonly, the term implies the notion that all actions are necessarily followed by lawful and legitimate consequences.
kartā The person or self as an agent.
kośa Sheath. The Advaita Vedānta conceives of the *jīva* or person as a multi-layered entity composed of five nested sheaths, with the body on the outside, followed by bodily functions, sensory capacities, cognitive functions, and finally blissfulness at the core
manas Common meaning of *manas* is the mind. In Advaita Vedānta, the basic features of *manas* are the capacities for cognitive differentiation and integration and for doubting and deciding.
manana The process of critical examination of the nature of selfhood in the light of the fundamental teachings of Vedānta as a means to self-realization.
māyā The Advaita Vedānta conception of the phenomenal world as a "Grand Illusion," so conceived because of the inherent limits of empirical knowledge and rational understanding.
mokṣa Liberation from the perpetual chain of actions and their consequences and the consequent cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.
mukti Synonym for *mokṣa* (see above).
nididhyāsana The state of being so completely absorbed in contemplation of Brahman that no other thought enters the mind.
niḥśreyas The highest Good as conceived in the Indian tradition; it usually implies the highest state of enlightenment through self-knowledge.
nirguṇa Without qualities. According to Advaita Vedānta, Brahman, the ultimate reality, is said to have a qualityless substrate behind or beyond the perceptible and intelligible world.
nivrikalpa pratyakṣa Direct experience without cognitive constructions, implying sensory experience that newborn babies and animals may have.
nivrikalpa samādhi An altered state of consciousness devoid of the subject–object split typical of the common, intentional states obtained in dreams and wakefulness.
niyama Observances, such as cleanliness and self-control, recommended in the second of eight steps to Yoga.
parā sattā Transcendental reality.
parā vidyā Transcendental knowledge of Self and reality obtained in higher states of consciousness, such as the fourth state described in the Upaniṣads.

prātibhāsika sattā World appearance in illusory perception, such as the appearance of silver in a conch shell.
prajñā A term used with a variety of meanings in various contexts: wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, discrimination, and the like.
Prakṛti A term used in the dualistic ontology of the Sāṅkhya system to designate the "material" as opposed to the sentient principle called *Puruṣa*. Sometimes translated as "primordial materiality."
pramā Knowledge, or cognition supported by at least some criteria of validation and uncontradicted by any available evidence.
pramāṇa An epistemic criterion for validating a cognition.
prāṇa Vital breath.
pratyakṣa Direct perception.
pratyāhāra Yogic term for the withdrawal of senses from the objects of awareness.
Puruṣa Literally, man, or a human being. In the dualistic ontology of the Sāṅkhya system, *Puruṣa* implies the Self, or the sentient principle of reality as distinguished from *Prakṛti*, the material principle.
rajas One of the three components or "strands" of Prakṛti as conceived in Sāṅkhya philosophy, *rajas* is the active principle, roughly equivalent to energy. The other two principles are *sattva* and *tamas*.
rasa Literally, juice, essence, or relish. In traditional Indian esthetics, *rasa* means "aesthetic relish," or the delectable quality inherent in a work of art.
sādhāraṇīkaraṇa The "generalization" or sharing of emotional experience during collective witnessing of dramatic and other works of art.
samādhi Name of a set of altered states of consciousness described in Yoga, Vedānta, and other systems of Indian philosophy.
saṁkalpa Integrative aspect of cognitive construction; also decision as opposed to doubt or indecision.
saṁsāra The perpetual cycle of action and its consequences, including the putative cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In the Indian tradition, in *saṁsāra*, suffering is believed to exceed happiness.
saṁskāra The impressions left behind by experiences and actions that are said to shape future experiences and behaviors.
sat Being.
sattva One of the three components or "strands" of *Prakṛti* as conceived in Sāṅkhya philosophy, *sattva* is said to be characterized by illumination and lightness as opposed to darkness and heaviness. The two other principles are *rajas* and *tamas*.
sāttvika bhāva Physiological reactions of the body in emotional states, such as perspiration and horripilation or bristling of hairs.
savikalpa pratyakṣa Experience involving cognitive construal combined with or superimposed on sensory experience.

śravaṇa Literally, listening. In Advaita Vedānta, *śravaṇa* implies listening to, or the study of, the fundamental principles of Vedānta for the purpose of self-realization.
śreyas Highest Good.
sthāyi bhāva Lasting as distinguished from transitory emotions. Bharata's theory of dramatics recognize eight lasting, and therefore basic, emotions.
tamas One of the three components or "strands" of Prakṛti as conceived in Sāṅkhya philosophy, *tamas* is said to be characterized by heaviness, inertia, and darkness. The two others are *sattva* and *rajas*.
tarka Logic, or critical thinking.
triguṇa The triad of qualities, especially *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, conceived as three strands of *Prakṛti* in Sāṅkhya philosophy.
turīyā Literally, a fourth; in the Upaniṣads and the system of Vedānta, *turīyā* implies the fourth state of consciousness, which is said to be devoid of intentionality or subject–object split and provides direct experience of Ātman–Brahman.
upādhi Adjuncts such as the mind and senses that produce the individuality and "enjoyership" (*bhoktṛtvam*) in the individual (*jīva*).
varṇāśrama dharma The duties of persons according to their station in life in the traditional Indian social system divided into four "castes" and the four stages of the life cycle.
vāsanā Desires, especially originating from drives or other inborn tendencies.
vibhāva Cause of emotion.
vikalpa Cognitive differentiation, abstraction, and imagination; also doubt and indecision.
viṣaya Object of awareness, or intentional object.
viṣayin Subject of intentional awareness.
vyabhicāri bhāva Transitory as distinguished from stable or basic emotions. Bharata's theory of dramatics recognizes some 33 transitory emotions.
vyāvaharika sattā "Practical reality" as perceived by the senses, consensually verified, and explained by reason. In Advaita Vedānta, this level of reality is distinguished from transcendental reality, or *parā sattā*.
Upaniṣad A category of Sanskrit texts considered to be part of the scriptures and known for their philosophical treatment of topics such as the nature of reality and the Self.
yama Restraints such as abstaining from injury and falsehood recommended as the first of eight steps to Yoga. Incidentally, Yama is the name of the Hindu deity who is said to preside over death.
yoga A term that refers to numerous systems of spiritual self-development, including the more commonly known one described in Patañjali's aphorisms.

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